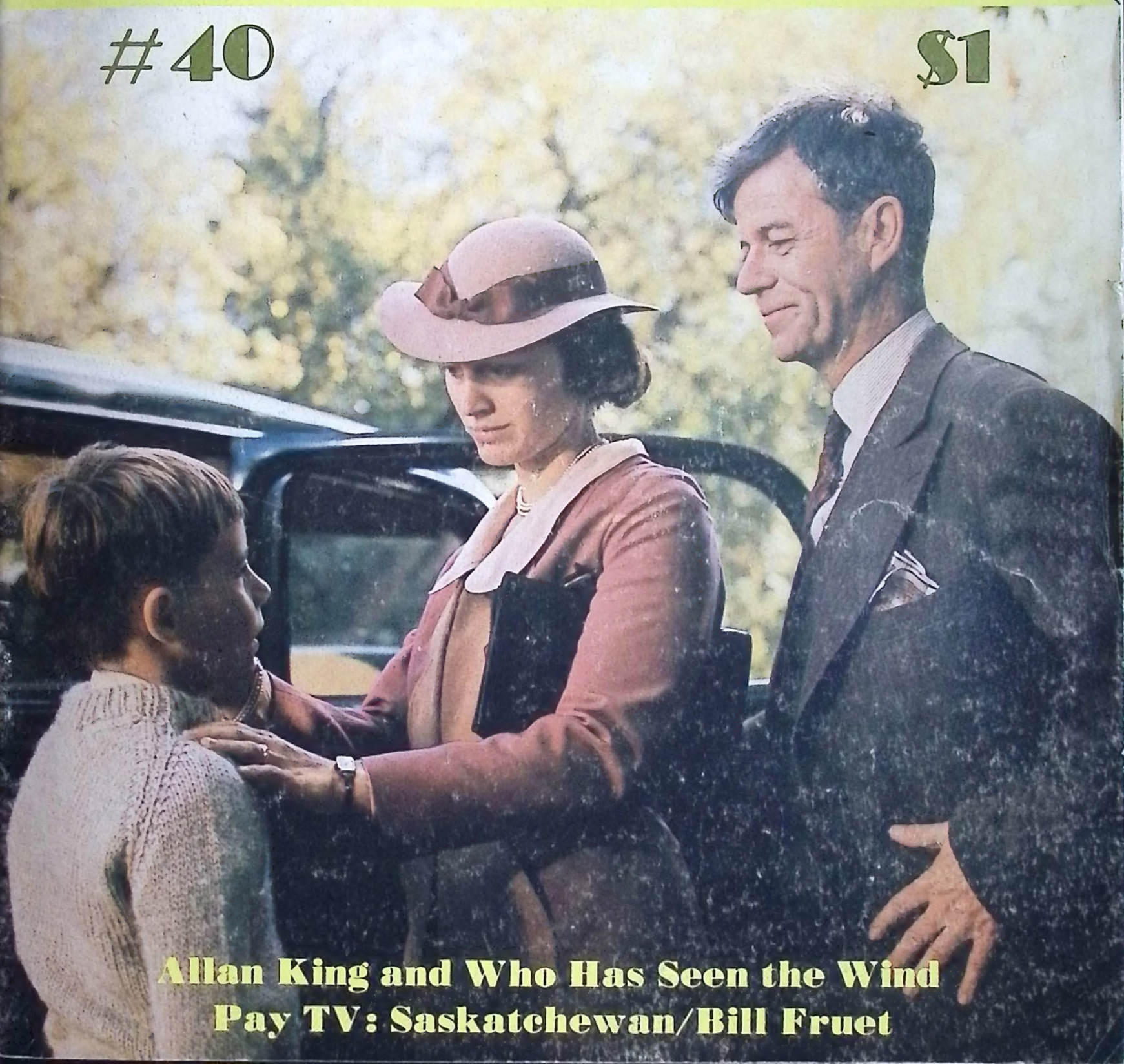


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Cover:

A scene from **Who Has Seen the Wind**. Peter Harcourt looks at Allan King as he was (see left) and measures what he has become, as reflected in his films (see p. 22).

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Cinema Canada Is On The Move!

The Toronto offices of **Cinema Canada** have moved to 67 Portland St., the home of the Toronto Filmmakers' Co-operative. We thank the Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre who was our kind and often understanding landlord for many years, and are happy that the demand for its services has increased to the point where it needed our office space. May we bring a similar luck to the Co-op.

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IT WILL HAVE TO BE SOLD... WHY NOT
TALK IT OVER WITH US FIRST - BECAUSE
THAT'S OUR POSITION IN CANADIAN CINEMA.**

REVERB

A Cheerful Philistine

"... The British," says Gerald Pratley, ("Are They Watching In Wichita?" April/May 1977) "do not make French films, the Americans do not make Russian films, the Spanish do not make German films. Why then should Canadians want to make American films - which is what so many English-language Canadian filmmakers feel bound to do these days?" Perhaps because Canada shares a boundary and language with the United States? Pratley should take another look at the atlas: Canada is a kind of elephantine Belgium, except that we haven't produced a Georges Simenon or Django Reinhardt (assuming a gypsy can have a nationality). Both Simenon and Reinhardt, of course, are often taken for French.

Pratley argues that an artist's talent is blighted when transferred to alien soil. His clincher: "Renoir's American films (he was forced into exile as a result of the Great War (sic)) were not the true Renoir." Now in a certain sense, any work created by an artist is "true" to him, but one sees what Pratley is getting at: *The Diary Of A Chambermaid* is a pretty dreadful film. Renoir, a typical Frenchman, transplants badly. Or does he? After Hollywood, Renoir went to India and made *The River*. I haven't seen it, but some say it's a masterpiece. ("... *Un beau film, de cette beauté majestueuse et sereine qui fait les grands morceaux symphoniques ou les grands cycles romanesques.*" - Claude Beylie: *Jean Renoir, Cinema D'Aujourd'hui*, Paris, May/June 1975.) When Renoir came back - belatedly - to France, he made one of his best films (*French Cancan*) and one of his worst (*Elena et les hommes*.) Renoir doesn't prove anything, except that even great directors have their ups and downs.

Suppose for "Renoir" we substitute "Hitchcock." I personally prefer Hitchcock's English films to his American, but I wouldn't argue that *The 39 Steps* is "truer" to him than *Shadow Of A Doubt*. And what about Bunuel? Do we accept *Land Without Bread* and reject *Los Olvidados* and *Cela s'appelle l'aurore*? I notice Pratley doesn't mention Norman McLaren. If McLaren emigrated tomorrow to the United States, does anyone believe his talent would suffer? There is no way of establishing that an artist is better for being, as it were, regional rather than cosmopolitan.

Pratley's nationalist aesthetic puts him in the curious critical position of being able to damn a film without seeing it. "... Bergman's next film, *The Serpent's Egg*, filmed in Munich, will be the first Bergman film that will not be true to him." Earlier in the article, he rhapsodises: "Think of the films of Eisenstein, and contemplate the natural expression of one's nationality in art of the screen." Thanks to Pratley, we now know that even if Eisenstein had succeeded in filming *An American Tragedy*, it wouldn't have been much good.

On Canadian cinema, Pratley is cheerfully philistine: "The feature-length films of the NFB - from *Drylanders* and *The Merry World Of Leopold Z* to *Why Rock The Boat?* and *The Heat Wave Lasted Four Days* - all have one common strength: they are naturally Canadian, making non concession to the so-called requirements of international box office. *Whether they succeed or not in both artistic or financial terms is immaterial.*" (My italics.) Maybe it isn't art, but it's Canadian. There's a form of Calvinism operating here; English-Canadian directors will have to take their chance with posterity, but the French Canadians are automatically among the elect. For the obvious linguistic reason, no one can mistake their work for Hollywood. "On a long bus journey from Kapuskasing," Pratley tells us, "I sat next to a French-speaking woodsman who looked and sounded exactly like a character from a Gilles Carle film." Had I been Pratley, I'd have changed my seat. But I suppose he sees no difference qualitatively between Carle and Michel Brault. It's enough that they're both Quebecers.

Nor does he seem able to distinguish between nationalism and chauvinism, between attacking Americans as imperialists and Americans as individuals. "... *Why Shoot The Teacher?*" fails because its principal character, on whom the success of the film depends, and who should be totally imbued with a sense of being Canadian, is played by an average American actor with no sense of feeling for the role and its background." Later Pratley concedes that, yes, Raymond Massey did play Abraham Lincoln, but that was all right, as there was no danger of American actors feeling they were "subjugated" by the lone Canadian. But what is valid for Bud Cort must also be for Massey, and an American Pratley would argue that, as a product of the Canadian upper class, Massey was singularly ill-equipped to impersonate Honest Abe. Or John Brown, for that matter.

Geoffrey Minish
Paris, France

No Universal Themes

Gerald Pratley's article "Are They Watching in Wichita?", hit upon many of our film industry's softer spots. As a hopeful filmmaker, I have followed this debate amongst the professionals, with great enthusiasm.

I do think that throughout it all, they have neglected one point. Great American films do not reflect a problem particular to Americans, but a universal problem as the Americans respond to it. Any good film is distinguished by the way it shows the rest of the world how one group of people are affected by a common problem. For

example, *The Grapes of Wrath* is foremost a film about poverty and economic depression. It is a great "American" film because it so accurately portrays how the American people lived through it.

Goin' Down the Road could have been about two young men from any small town trying to make their way in the big city. It was so wonderfully Canadian because it showed how two Canadian young men went to Toronto. It was a set of situations that anyone in any country could identify with. The actual details (Newfoundland to Toronto) are simply the outer trappings.

Bergman's films are about Swedes experiencing humiliation, sexual frustration, broken marriages. The key is not "Swedes experiencing", but "experiencing humiliation, etc."

If Canadians were to acknowledge that they too are subject to those things which affect everyone and make films about that, no one would care whether it was made and set in Toronto or New York or Salt Lake City, Utah.

It is the lack of universal themes that makes so many Canadian films unacceptable to American audiences. No one wants to watch a group of people doing something that they themselves don't understand. It is foolish to search for "the Canadian identity". It is apparent in everything we do, in how we react and how poverty, wealth, love, hate and political strife affect us.

Any good filmmaker knows this, and sees that it is the key to world acceptance of his work.

Arden Ryshpan
Montreal

Standing Up For A Shoe

The following correspondence took place between Anna Kalsø, the creator of the *Earth Shoe*, and Veronika Soul the creator of *Cinema Canada's* recent cover.

Dear Ms. Soul,

I saw your shoe cover for a film magazine and wonder one thing: How come no *Earth Shoes*?

Anna Kalsø

Dear Anna Kalsø,

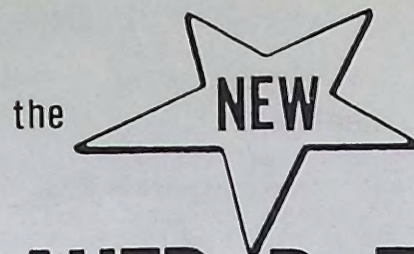
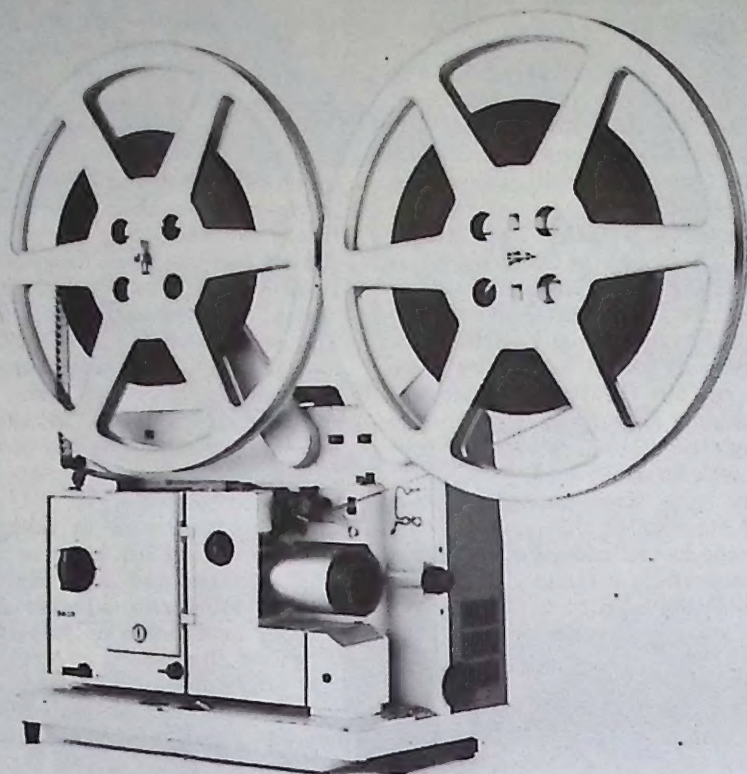
It seemed appropriate to use Canadian shoes for the *Cinema Canada* issue on Canadian film and culture. So ... I didn't really forget *Earth Shoes*... I forgot *Roots* (*Canada's answer to Earth Shoes*)!

Veronika Soul

P.S. Thank you for your shoe postcard. For some reason, whenever I see an *Earth Shoe*, the only thing I can think about is Stevie Wonder and high heeled snakeskin dancing shoes with lavender silk stockings.



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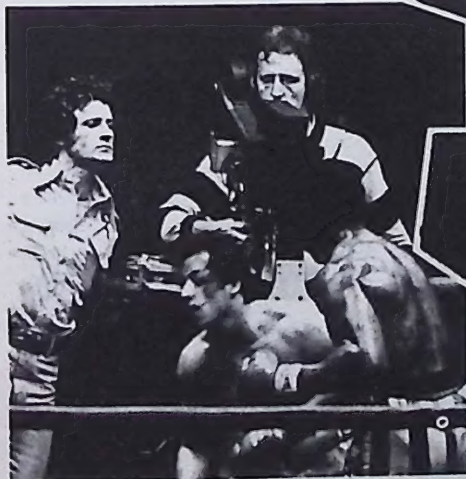
"... Rocky's training, revealing Stallone's own grueling five-month preparation for the part, is fascinating to watch. Thanks to a newly developed body-held camera, cinematographer James Crabe was able (without impossibly costly tracking platforms) to follow Stallone jogging before dawn through all of Philadelphia, a literal opening up which appropriately symbolizes an opening up of Rocky's world and his chances."

Charles Champlin
L.A. Times CALENDAR
November 28, 1976

"... Not only did that last reel include some of the most wildly exciting fight footage ever put on the screen, but it also provided an emotionally gratifying capstone to a picture that is truly an ode to the human spirit... And a final word must be said for James Crabe's incredible camera work—not only his stunning views of Philadelphia's historic monuments, but the squalor of the South Philadelphia slums, two breath-taking swoops up the broad steps of the Philadelphia Art Museum, a protracted run past swinging sides of beef in a meat-packing plant, and, of course, the virtuoso photography of the climactic bout... In many ways, ROCKY is a picture that should make movie history."

Arthur Knight
The Hollywood Reporter
November 5, 1976

Camera Operator Garrett Brown, inventor of the system, is seen using the STEADICAM stabilized camera system to film the dramatic fight sequence in ROCKY. James Crabe was Director of Photography.



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— The vice-presidents of United Artists, Universal and MGM in Montreal.

THE ILLUSTRATED NEWS

THE WEATHER

Sunny and warm, causing some secretaries on vacation to forget about the shop

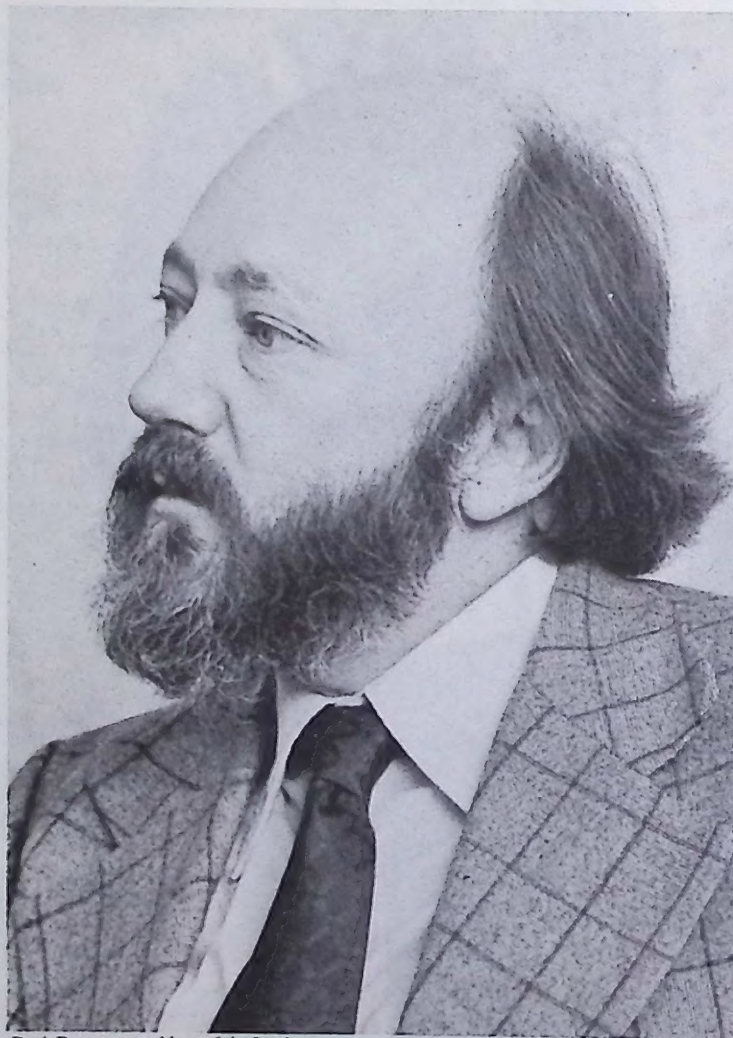
Vol. 1, no.6

Cash For Quebec

Two million dollars will soon be pumped into the Québécois filming industry in an effort to bring it out of the severe depression of the past years. Rock Demers, president of the Institut Québécois de Cinéma, announced the four different aid programs which the Institut will administer.

The Institut — the organization created from the private sector by the Law Concerning Cinema — will distribute its funds, by investing or through loans, in the following areas: production-45%, distribution-17%, exhibition-6%, with an additional 17% going to a special cultural fund. Though the Institut is assured of an initial \$2 million, it has promises of additional sums from the provincial government.

The criteria for support are well defined. For production projects, films must be written and directed by people legally residing in Quebec. The great majority of the actors and technicians must be from the province, and the production house and equipment must be Québécois. Films in English will be considered on the same footing as films in French. Production aid may go to short films and features, as well as to films made for theatrical distribution, for television, for the educational market, etc.



Rock Demers, president of the Institut

Aid to distribution is awarded to help the distribution of Québécois films, and to promote the distribution of foreign films of quality. The Institut will also advance sums for dubbing.

The sums for exhibition are to go to refurbish old theatres, with preference given to localities far from the metropolitan centres. It will also be possible for new theatres to be constructed, and for large old theatres to be sub-divided into complexes.

The cultural fund will supplement the three preceding funds, allowing for additional sums for exceptional projects, and to give aid to projects which don't meet the criteria of the other plans.

Projects requesting more than \$20,000 will be submitted first to a jury which will judge only the quality and the more specific 'quebécois' input of the project. Then, it will be cleared through an in-house committee which will judge the economic and cultural aspects. Both groups will make recommendations to the Board of Directors which will make the ultimate decision concerning the allocation of funds.

Connie Tadros

Boyle Rank Moves On Moves Out



Harry Boyle

CRTC Chairman Harry Boyle will leave his position on September 16. He announced his retirement when the Commission handed in the results of the CRTC Inquiry into CBC Bias.

Boyle has been in broadcasting since 1942, most of it spent as a renegade producer at the CBC. Now, at 62, he feels he has accomplished what he could at the CRTC, and will move on to teach or be an executive with a broadcasting organization. He is also considering an offer with the 'Canadian' edition of TV Guide.

His retirement decision comes as the war between the Commission and the federal Communications Department heats up a situation that will greet Boyle's successor. Likely candidates for the job are Liberal party official Jean Fortier, Charles Dalfen, now with the Commission; and Boyle's personal choice; and even professional, mandarin Bernard Ostry, now on sabbatical leave after running Ottawa's Canada Day celebrations.

Odeon Theatres, operating 160 screens in a network of 130 theatres, is up for sale. Asking price is \$30 million, and Mitchell, Plummer and Co., who are handling the sale for Britain's Rank Organization, expect a buyer to be found by the Fall.

According to Odeon's active Chairman Chris Salmon, the chain hasn't been all that profitable lately, although parent company Rank annual reports showed it to be among the most profitable of the company's subsidiaries. Perhaps the loss of a couple of American distributors' products or the prospect of levies, intensified Rank's deliberations. More likely the retirement of President Harry Blumson and the lack of a successor, combined with government and product pressure lead to the decision.

Any sale must be approved by the Foreign Investment Review Board if the buyer is foreign, a prospect that appears to be unlikely in the face of nationalist pressure for improved exhibition.



Past president, Harry Blumson

The most likely buyer among the 20 or so groups examining the purchase is Paul Morton. Odeon and Morton run a chain of theatres out West. Morton has recently acquired control of Global Television and bought a TV station out West, and has done so with mostly western money. National partners recently formed an investment bank based in Winnipeg. He's got access to the cash and he knows what the chain is worth; and his money is Canadian.

Stephen Chesley

Restructure Industry

It began as an election ploy. During the 1975 Ontario campaign two shootings in high schools were supposedly linked to media publicity. So Premier Bill Davis appointed Family Court Judge Lucien Beaulieu, columnist Scott Young, and, as Chairman, politician, lawyer and broadcaster Judy LaMarsh to a Royal Commission on Violence in the Media.

The Commission's task was to study the effects on society of increasing exhibition of violence in the communications media, to determine if there is a cause and effect between this phenomenon and the incidence of violent crime, to let the public speak about it, and to make recommendations on any measures that should be taken.

There were 1,000 oral and written briefs; an interim report that aroused universal con-

demnation for its threat to, among other things, license news media; report authored by the Director of Research was qualified but not rejected by the commission; fireworks between LaMarsh and the media over the latter's reluctance to participate in the inquiry; controversy over the opening film



Judy LaMarsh

(made by Insight Productions) which was considered biased.

The final report brought even greater controversy. The Commission announced that it had in fact determined a connection between increased exposure to violence via the media and the incidence of violent crime. They left no doubt that the media exploits violence, feels no public responsibility, and is only in it for the money. Despite twenty-eight original research studies for this commission, and volumes of foreign research examined, no direct link between violence in media and society was proven conclusively. Strike one.

It was really strike two, three, four and more that raised the roof. And, in the hullaboo, allowed certain very important conclusions to become lost.

The Commission castigated news media for its coverage and proposed a Freedom of Information Act, coupled with a Media Ombudsman to regulate it,

regional councils to inform the ombudsman, and what seemed like attempts at control of the news media.

Then it truly exceeded its mandate by calling for the complete reorganisation of Canadian broadcasting and film, complete with a central authority for each, separate programming and carrying systems with a twelve channel TV system offering greater selection of programs, a Film Canada to run the film industry, classification of TV and films, and enough of a spectre of 1984 to destroy all intelligent comment about the key finding of the report: too much of our culture is imported.

In no uncertain terms the Commission says that not only violence but all the images and content in all our media are foreign in origin and foreign in quantity to a far too great extent; hence, the commission proposes Canadian-run institutions.

Stephen Chesley

Productions Full Steam Ahead

Feature film activity in Toronto at the end of August is bursting; most of the features announced earlier in the summer have in fact begun shooting.

Coup d'état is using downtown Toronto sites for interiors and exteriors, as well as Canadian Forces Base Borden for battle locations. Peter O'Toole, Marcella Saint-Amant, Barry Morse, Chuck Shamata, Gary Reineke, Jon Granik, and Eli Rill are among the cast. David Hemmings is a co-producer and co-star, with Robert Cooper executive producer and Chris Dalton producing for the Martyn Burke written and directed opus. DOP is Ousama Rawi.

Yeti (Bigfoot) is filming in Toronto and the North. It's an Italian-Canadian co-production with Stefani Films of Italy, and is about the Sasquatch myth. Special effects will be done in Rome, and the crew is divided equally between both countries, Frank Kramer is in charge in Toronto; Duane Howard is local publicist.



Susannah York

Christopher Plummer, Elliot Gould and Susannah York are in **The Silent Partner**, a caper feature to be directed by Daryl



Alexandra Stewart

Duke. Producers are Joel Michaels and Stephen Young, and executive producer is Garth Drabinsky. It's now shooting in Toronto with a \$2.5 million budget.

Tom Berenger has been chosen to play the lead in the Robert Lantos-George Kazcender production of **In Praise of Older Women**, to be shot in Montreal. Bibi Anderson and Alexandra Stewart are also in the cast. Script is by novelist Paul Gottlieb. Budget is \$1 million, with CFDC participation. The producers were in Toronto looking for cast, including a young boy.

Neilsen-Ferns continues to announce plans, and some are moving into production. First is the seven episodes of the **New Avengers** to be made in Canada. Ross McLean is under contract to N-F. and his first move upon becoming producer on this series was to hire a different casting agency and almost immediately cancel several directors, including Peter Pearson.

The company has announced more plans for **The First Americans**, a series to be made with Marlon Brando. It'll be thirteen hours with ten of those dramas and three documentaries. U.S. government support has been given, and negotiations for Canadian government support are now under way. Brando plans to give his share of any profits to Indian groups.

With Truesdale Pictures of New York, N-F will make **All Men's Hands**, a \$2 million western set in Canada's west in 1880. Executive producers are Sam S. Cunningham of Truesdale and Jim Hanley of N-F. Production is set for Vancouver October 1 under line producer Harve Sherman. Post-production will be in Toronto.

Quadrant Films (**Sunday in the Country**, **Find the Lady**, etc.) will shift gears to become involved only in financing features through its National Film Finance Company and in foreign sales through Compass Films, thus leaving direct production. David Perlmutter will continue to head this area, while John

Trent emphasises his own directing and producing activities. Trent is currently producing a three-part series for CBC called **The Albertans**, working with scripter Tony Sheer on two feature projects, and with William Stevenson (**A Man Called Intrepid**) on another feature project. They'll continue to share office space.

Al Guest and Jean Mathieson of Rainbow Animation have a hit on their hands. Their **Captain Nemo** cartoon series will be sold in up to thirty countries, so they've increased production from the twenty-six episodes and will do a further fifty-six.

Wild Canada will be a CBC co-production with Manitou Productions of Toronto. Three episodes will be made per year for the next four years in the series focussing on unspoiled and spectacular areas of the country.

John and Janet Foster will star in the shows, with Foster directing. Ralph Ellis is president of Manitou, and for this series Dan Gibson will produce, Jim McLean will assist Gibson, and Robert Ryan will be DOP.



Don Gibson

Peter Pearson is doing several films for Magder Productions of Toronto. **Ted Kotcheff** and **Harold Greenberg** struck out in Hollywood in their attempt to interest major studios in Mordecai Richler's **St. Urbain's Horseman**. Meanwhile, Kotcheff will direct **Someone is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe** for Robert Aldrich and Lorimar Company this fall. **Margaret Atwood** and **Graeme Gibson** produced an unsatisfactory first draft of **Margaret Laurence's The Diviners**, according to the producers. So they're looking in the U.S. for a satis-

factory female screenwriter to try again. **Colleen Dewhurst**, now making a feature directed by **Teri McLuhan** in Nova Scotia, has expressed interest in the lead in a feature based on **Sinclair Ross' As for Me and My House**, the project **Peter Pearson** spent years trying to get off the ground. (Dewhurst is Canadian, from Montreal). Coincidentally, **Micheline Lanctot** is trying scripting, and chose this novel for an attempt. **Peter Fonda** will make a trucking movie for local producer **Jon Slan** this fall. American International Pictures has guaranteed \$1 million advance against grosses. Peter Carter is to direct.



Micheline Lanctot

Leo Rampen will be executive producer of a new current affairs series on CBC called **Confederation**. Twelve half-hours are planned... **Quarterly Report** is another CBC project. Under executive producer **Ray Hazzan**, it will be four ninety-minute documentaries on topics of national interest. The first, set for September, will be on Quebec... CTV stations CFTO in Toronto and CJOH in Ottawa will co-produce a weekly newsmagazine show. The hour slot will be for Monday at 10 pm, and will be supervised by **Fraser Kelly** and **Douglas Fisher**.

...The... Festivals

Chairman Nat Raylor and Executive Director Patricia Thompson are sending out entry forms for this year's Canadian Film Awards, with a deadline of September 19. But no date for the awards has been set beyond "November".

More information from 175 Bloor Street East Toronto M4W 1E1 or call 923 6050.

Bill Marshall's Toronto-held Festival of Festivals, set for September 9-18, has announced procedural and content details. Publicist Sandra Johnson says the Fest is to be titled Ten Days to Show the World. The showings will be at the Sheraton Hotel Cinemas and the Toronto Dominion Cinema. The former will screen two features in the daytime and the latter, one. A double bill will be seen in each of the Sheraton houses at night, a single gala in the T-D house. Tickets will be available at the houses or at Festival headquarters in the Harbour Castle Hilton Hotel. For Everything you pay \$125, for everything except the galas \$70. (students half-price due to a Coca Cola Grant), or \$25 for the ten conferences.

Each day from 9-3:30, there will be a conference at the T-D site, five for producers under David Perlmutter, and five for crafts under the CCFM and critic William Wolf. Gala receptions will be held opening night at Harbour Castle and closing night in City Hall Rotunda.

Programming includes a two-day session led by David Helpern Jr. (**Hollywood on Trial**), on Remaining Independent, and family and children shows and workshops at the nearby Harbourfront complex organised by Linda Beath of the Festival, Doug Eliuk of the National Film Board, and Hannah Fisher of Harbourfront.

Programming and programmers are as follows: Filmmakers Choice by Agnes Varda, Overlooked and Underrated by Martin Knelman, twenty features from Quebec by Jean-Pierre Bastien of the Cinéma-thèque Québécoise, a Max Ophüls Re-

tro by Peter Harchout, a Dino de Laurentiis retro by Bill Marshall, Update: New European Films by David Overby.

Horse Latitudes received a Special Jury Prize at the Toulon International Festival, with special praise for lead Gordon Pinsent. Peter Rowe wrote and directed it, Chalmers Adams and Tony Hall produced, and Richard Leiterman was DOP...

At the Cannes International Advertising and Commercials Festival, Canadian entries were very visible. Winners of Bronze Lions were Campbell Soup's **Covered Wagon**, from McKim Advertising and made by TDF with Bob Canning director and Fritz Spiess lighting, and Rowntree Mackintosh's **Black Magic**, directed by Bill Irish. A Diploma was awarded to Seven Up's **Evolution**, made by McKim and TDF. 2500 delegates watched 1300 commercials. Canadian winners will be included in a compilation feature to be distributed in Canada by Adfilms of Toronto...

The Moscow Fest in July saw Canadian participation to some extent. André Brassard's **The Late Blossom** was shown in the Information section, and two Anglo-Canadian co-productions, **The Uncanny** and **The Age of Innocence** were screened by Britain's Rank Organisation in the general showings. Eric Till's feature **It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet** was an Official British Entry.

Future Festivals for your travels or entries include the 12th Teheran International Festival of Films for Children and Young Adults, set for October 31-November 7. Deadline is the beginning of September. Films are divided by age categories, and can be any length. Write Takhte-Tavous Avenue, No 31 Jam Street, Teheran Iran...

The International Festival of Science and Technical Films, held biennially in Belgrade is set for this year. 16 and 35 mm films are eligible, whether made for TV, theatrical or non-theatrical showing. Deadline is October 1st. Write Jugoslovensko Drustvo Nikola Tesla, 11000 Belgrade Kneza Milosa 10, Post office box 359...

Techfilm 77 will be held in Pardubice, Czechoslovakia October 20-28, and will screen science and technical films. Deadline is August 31. Write Infor Film Servis Techfilm Stepanska 42, 11000 Praha 1, Czechoslovakia.

McLaren Honored: CBC

Animation master Norman McLaren was the subject of a five-part CBC radio series in August. It ran in the *Nightcap* slot from August 8-12, and featured McLaren and colleagues

discussing his career and film theories. Series was done by poet Robert Zend, and was called *The Five Faces of Norman McLaren*.

Alternative Distribution



Chanson pour Julie

A distribution set-up financed by the CFDC, called Le Nouveau Réseau, was begun in order to show Quebec films that hadn't received proper distrib efforts. Sites chosen for bookings are alternately theatres, church halls, and so on. Now the effort has begun in Ontario.

A week of Quebec cinema played the Ciné Lumière theatre in Toronto in late spring. It was publicised to some extent, and received media coverage, but since only one print was subtitled, it's unlikely that uge audiences could have been expected.

Films screened were Jean-Guy Noel's **Ti-Cul Tougas**, Marcel Carrière's **Ti-Mine**, **Bernie pis la gang**, **Québec-Acadie** by Michel Brault and André Gladu, **La piastre** by Alain Chartrand, **Les beaux dimanches** by Richard Martin, **Ah, au coeur du monde primitif** by François Floquet and Daniel Bertolino, **L'Absence** by Brigitte Sorel, **Chanson pour Julie** by Jacques Vallée, **Il était une fois dans l'est** by André Brassard, and **L'amour blessé** by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre.

For Audiovisual Users Only

A new information service for audiovisual users on a limited budget has been formed in British Columbia. Called the A-V Interface Society, it plans to issue a periodical without ads; financial support, up to now from the Canada Council, will come from \$10 membership fees.

Plans are for a journal with separate reviews for easy filing; one topic per issue will be covered. Also a film/TV periodical directory, a series of biblio-

ographies, and so on. The only way to obtain the efforts is through the membership.

Organizers and officers include Dave Stanton, a journalist and publisher, as president; Chuck Odell, a film historian, as vice-president; writer and editor Bill Burns, artist and teacher June Foote, animator, Bill Maylone, and filmmaker Lorne Moore.

For more information, write the Society at P.O. Box 1542, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2X7.



Appointments

Ronald A. Irwin has been appointed a part-time CRTC Commissioner, for a term of five years. He's a lawyer and a former mayor of Sault Ste. Marie.

Cam Cathcart has been appointed Executive News Producer for CBLT-TV, the CBC flagship station in Toronto. He was formerly Radio News correspondent for the CBC in Washington.

The names of News and Public Affairs hosts have been announced by CTV department head **Michael Maclear**. In rotation for the Sunday Pubaffairs hours, along with permanent host **Peter Trueman**, will be **André Payette**, **Barbara Amiel**, and **Jack McGaw**.

Both **John Hirsch**, head of CBC drama, and **Muriel Sherrin**, his administrative assistant, have announced that when present contracts expire, they will leave their posts. Hirsch's departure date is February 1; Sherrin has already resigned, although she's staying on until the end of August.

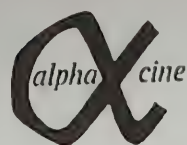
At this time, Hirsch is considering an offer to remain with the department as a consultant, and will announce his decision

in the Fall. Sherrin, on the other hand, is considering other offers from within the corporation. She's an experienced hand at political manipulation, and served as Hirsch's link with the higher-ups. Her administrative skill can be applied just about anywhere.

Replacing Hirsch is **John Kennedy**. He has just returned from a two-year stint in Quebec City, and was with the drama department before that. He will assume an administrative role in all likelihood, and leave creative activity to the individual producers.

Various producers treading softly especially **Stanley Colbert**, who, as Executive Producer of all film drama (except **Ralph Thomas' For the Record** series) and a personal Hirsch appointee, will be feeling his way under Kennedy's eye.

It's been no secret that producers and others haven't been happy with Hirsch's idiosyncracies, but all admit that he opened up the department to much young new talent, even if he couldn't allow them to grow and gain more solid experience, mainly because of budget limitations.



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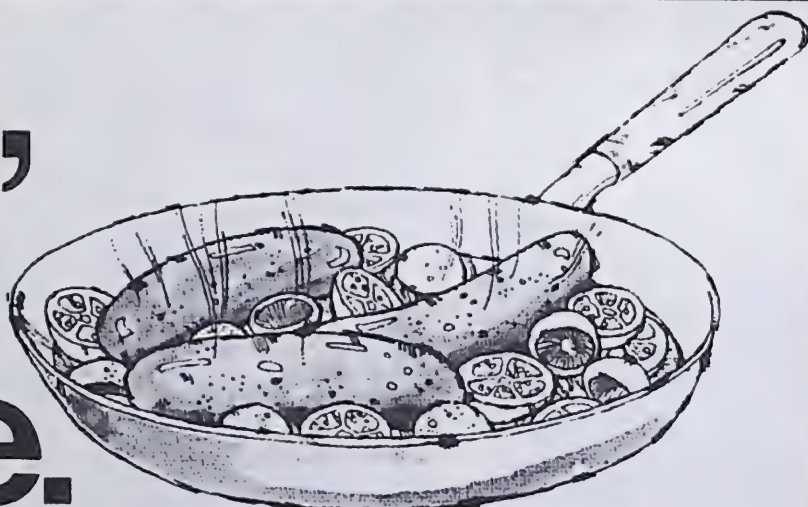
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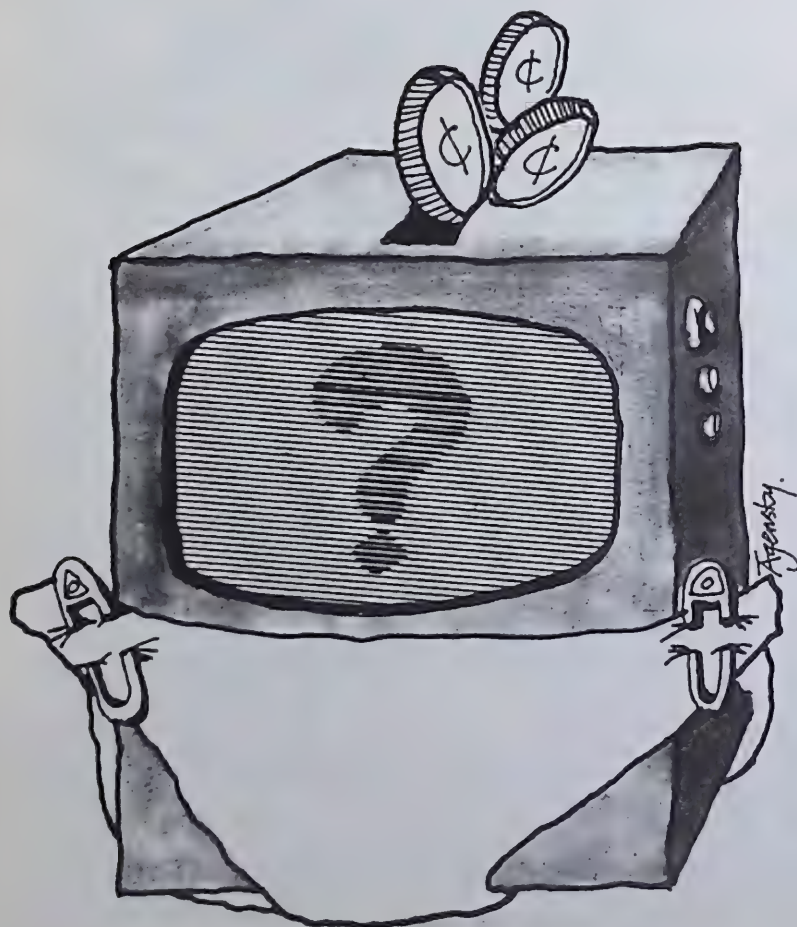
Our apologies for reporting Universal's 10 week take on Airport 77 as \$2,400 instead of \$2,400,000 in the last issue.

Title	Origin	Distributor	Period Covered	Places Played	Total Weeks	Gross
Airport	US	Universal	25 Mar - 3 June	Can	10	\$2,400,000.
L'absence	Can	Nouveau Réseau	20 Mar - May	Que		7,075.
Cathy's Curse	Can/Fre	Cinepix	29 July - 5 Aug	Que	1	6,000.
Etrange Petite Fille					1	50,000.
La Grande Bourgeoise	Ital	Frontier	29 Apr - 5 Aug	BC, Ont, Que	14	51,000.
Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo	US	Bellevue	8 July - 5 Aug	Canada	4	520,000.
Le Horoscope d'Elise	Can	Nouveau Réseau	Jan - May	Que		26,647.
J.A. Martin photographe	Can	NFB	11 Feb - 4 Aug	Que	25	157,537.
Love at First Sight	Can	Ambassador	17 June - 7 July	Toronto	3	23,108.
La Marquise d'O	Fre	Prima	3 Dec - 23 Dec	Montreal	3	12,000.
The Marquise of O			22 July - 1 Aug	Toronto	1	12,000.
Rabid	Can	Cinepix	8 Apr - 23 June	BC, Ont, Que	11	347,520.
Rage			8 Apr - 16 June	Que	10	212,540.
Ragtime Summer	Can/UK	Danton	29 Apr - 18 June	B, Alb, Ont		39,182.
Rituals	Can	Astral	21 July - 28 July	Ont	1	39,774.
Slapshot	US	Universal	25 Mar - 3 June	Canada	10	3,000,000.
Smokey and the Bandit	US	Universal	22 July - 11 Aug	Canada	3	1,500,000
A Sweeter Song	Can	Ambassador	11 Mar - 14 June	Alb - Ont		13,777.
Why Shoot the Teacher	Can	Ambassador	24 June - 5 Aug	Alb-Ont-Que	6	297,016.
Young Lady Chatterly	US	Frontier	24 June - 5 Aug	BC, Ont, Que	6	125,000.
Les Mensonges que mon père m'a conté	Can	Nouveau Réseau	Mar - May	Que		16,298
Le Skieur d'Everest	Can	Nouveau Réseau	Jan - May	Que		43,252.
Ti-Cul Tougas	Can	Nouveau Réseau	Nov - May	Que		33,142.

Will Pay TV prove to be the saviour of Canadian culture? Will it resolve the problems of Canadian program production? Or will it simply reinforce the American domination of our broadcasting system? Don Kerr writes from Saskatchewan where the people of the Prairies have their own ideas about Canadian culture.

the great untried experiment

by Don Kerr



This is a belated response to the Pay TV Supplement, belated because the cable situation in Saskatchewan is only now beginning to come clear. It appears that by fall a new model for delivering cable TV, including Pay TV, will be in operation here. It's a model no one writing in the Supplement envisaged; it has serious implications both for media control and Canadian production; and it goes a considerable way towards meeting various of the goals of Canadian programming put forward in the Supplement.

Sometbackground first. Saskatchewan is the last major market without basic cable service. Back in May, 1973, after some public discussion, the provincial government published its cable TV guidelines, in which it offered financial assistance to groups applying for CRTC licenses providing they were: 1) community controlled, 2) non-profit, 3) co-ops, 4) pledged to help small centres eventually receive the service. Co-ops were established under those guidelines in the four centres up for licensing: Regina, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, North Battleford.

I'm involved with the Saskatoon Cable Co-op. We saw the co-op structure as the ideal means of creating a vital community channel, both because the community would have control and because the channel would be so well funded — all the shareholders' dividends returned to community programming. The co-ops thought of themselves as the best

Don Kerr is a freelance journalist who works for the CBC and is a member of the Saskatoon Cable Co-op.

vehicle for achieving the CRTC's own goals for local programming.

But not according to that body. CRTC hearings were held in February, 1976, and awards made in July. Two co-ops received licenses, Regina and North Battleford, as did two private applicants. Digression for anger. The awards made no sense in terms of service to Saskatchewan, and a lot of people were furious. Regina is the odd man out in the co-ops here, always closer to a federal than a provincial position. It serves as the CRTC's popular front in Saskatchewan, a role it has played with great energy. North Battleford has too small a population base to operate very successfully on its own. The reason most people offer for the CRTC's decision is that it was in the Canadian tradition of compromise, give half to the co-ops and half to private industry. Merit as a basis for awarding licenses seems to have been thrown out, politics introduced in its place. The experiment of province-wide co-operative cable TV would have been marvellously exciting, but presumably too much to hope for in a country that has always encouraged profit-making media control.

At any rate, with the awards made that should have meant 'game over'. But Sask Tel, the common carrier, didn't get what it wanted either; total ownership of the cable hardware. So it said it wouldn't hook up licensees, and hasn't, though it has continued to lay cable in the four cities.

Now the battle was joined. On their side the two private licensees first tried to operate without Sask Tel, by contracting with CN-CP for microwave services, and by laying their own cable in the city lanes. But Saskatoon solicitor's judgement was that all residual legislative rights belong to the province; it controls the lanes. End of lame plan one.

With the federal game blocked, a new provincial team started playing. Three of the co-ops (Regina out) proposed a closed-circuit cable TV system. All programs would be rented, put on playback machines and sent out over the usual cable. Since it wouldn't be a broadcast receiving undertaking the system wouldn't come under federal jurisdiction. Since the co-ops were willing to let Sask Tel own the cable hardware, they could – and have – signed contracts with Sask Tel. North Battleford is already selling hook – ups. Closed-circuit TV could be in operation by fall.

The battle has now moved into the parliament and legislature, with each side proposing a new bill that asserts control over closed-circuit TV. The federal government has introduced Bill C-43, the Telecommunications Act. If that act becomes law as it stands the federal government would seem to say, through its new definition of broadcast receiving undertaking, and through Sections 32c, 32c vii, 39, 71, that it controls closed circuit (and pay) TV. The act would also grant the CRTC power over rights-of-ways in lanes. The province on its side has proclaimed Bill 95, An Act Respecting Community Cablecasters, the main thrust of which is to claim control over closed-circuit TV. It now plans to test the bill in the courts, and the next field of battle may be the courts, as they are asked to decide federal/provincial rights one more time.

The ministers on both sides met at an end-of March Communications Ministers meeting in Edmonton (boycotted by Quebec). Saskatchewan claimed a victory at that meeting, the issue of pay TV going to a federal-provincial committee for study and the issue of hardware ownership finally settled in the province's favor, though it's not clear the CRTC has agreed to that.

Back to the licensees. They still need CRTC approval to accept the Sask Tel tariff (based on Sask Tel hardware ownership and outside the original licensing conditions). To place themselves in a stronger competitive position, three of them have applied to the CRTC to have their distant head at Tolstoi, Manitoba (4 American channels) rather

than at Outram, Saskatchewan (3 American channels) and the hearing date is June 7. If the CRTC grants the request, can all that Boyle says about "cultural security" be sincere? If the licensees succeed, the new microwave route may take till the end of 1978 to construct.

Meanwhile closed-circuit TV will likely be a reality by fall. It will offer a six channel package – a community channel, and educational channel, and four channels of rented programs – a traditional channel, an old movie channel, a premium movie channel (pay TV), a children's channel.

There are obvious commercial disadvantages to closed-circuit TV (no live sports, not as many police stories, etc. for those who want them), and some considerable advantages too (no advertising, the possibility of replaying programs). But the issue I'd like to address in response, at last, to the Pay TV Supplement is Canadian programming.

Conventional cable takes its signals from the world's longest unguarded experiment in cultural osmosis. It brings America to your hearth and my children, and money to the cablecasters' pockets day after day unto the final sign off, and it can't do anything else (even if it wanted to.) Closed-circuit rents programs for 4 channels, 2 of them movie channels. Of course it will rent American programming, but other programming as well, British for instance, but most especially Canadian. We will be a new market, albeit not a large one, for Canadian productions, and will likely make maximum possible use of Canadian programs, because there's a strong pressure group within the co-op for that to happen.

Then of course we'll be doing our own programming, which is the reason we all set off down the twisted, rocky path of public service four years ago. The hope is still that we will create the best per capita community channels in the country. As well, the new provincial Community Cablecasters Act includes a provision, based on the co-ops' application to the CRTC, for a levy per subscriber that would go to a provincial programming fund. That could amount to some \$700,00 a year in five years. That's new production money. The fund is the provincial version of Madame Sauvé's 15¢ of Pay TV for program production.

The money won't go into a federal fund, however, but can be spent only for programming in the province. Nobody in Saskatchewan will oppose that. The province has always been badly done by in communication and the arts. We only received CBC television in '69 and '70, and are the last major area to receive cable. There is no television production in the province, other than newscasts and weather forecasts. I do some freelance radio work – there are no facilities for that in Saskatoon and you use the bloody phone to send things in. When programs are made about the province they're made by teams of CBC-NFB folks flown in on commando raids. A nationally centralized production fund would be lovely if you lived in Monolithopolis, but it gets damned depressing living out on the nether reaches of great corporate bodies and receiving periodically a little programming pumped in from the heart of the matter, and sending back in return greenback dollars and an occasional sputtering letter of rage.

So, the co-op and closed circuit option is aimed entirely at maximizing Canadian program production, in line with the ideals of Boyle and Sauvé, though we will operate on a regional basis.

As for media control, of all the contributors to the Pay TV Supplement, Graham Spry came closest to expressing our ideal of control – "some form of autonomous public ownership" with as "little as is necessary of the state, the party in power, and as much of the public as is practicable." Local public control of the media is the great untried experiment in Canada. □

1977

annecy report

Each year, the animation enthusiasts of this world gather together to see recent work and to award prizes. The gathering places are alternately Annecy, Zagreb and, since last year, Ottawa. Ian Birnie was in Annecy this year and reports on some of the Canadian entries.

by Ian Birnie



The making of the Sand Castle



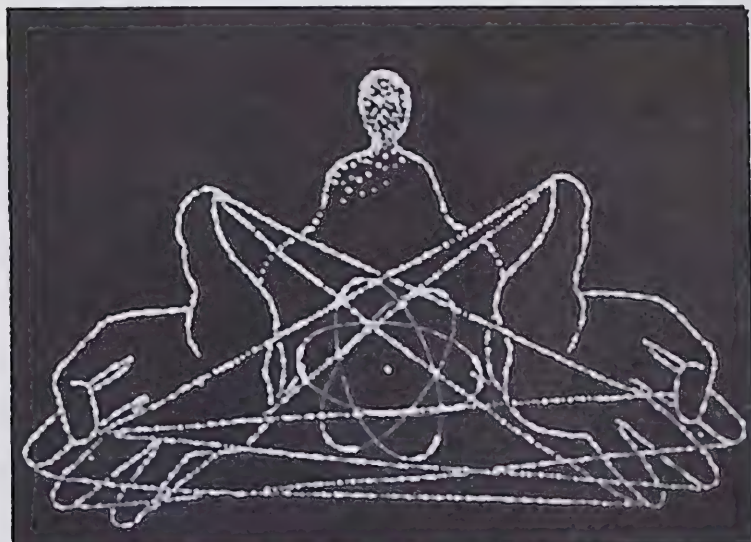
The annual international animation festival – this year held in its biannual home, Annecy, France – honored Canada for the ‘best national selection’, a label that was further born out by the prize winners. A compliment to be sure, yet of the 14 official entries only three stood up to international competition and all were from established NFB animators.

Co Hoedeman’s **The Sand Castle** – the popular hit of the festival and a grand prize winner (with Holland’s **David**) – is a funny, charming look at a society of plastecine creatures who methodically build a fortress of sand only to see it swept away by the inevitable wind. Far from being a pessimism laden tract on the futility of endeavor, the film exudes a rarely seen *joie de vivre* and succeeds as a celebration of communal industry. Hoedeman’s almost childlike perception of character provides his polyglot workforce with a requisite number of whimsical trunks, tentacles, hands, beaks and brows – all of which are skillfully animated for the purpose of drilling, shaping, and smoothing sand. Working at a table-top sandbox, this Dutch-born animator, whose past films (**Tchou-Tchou**, **The Owl and the Crow**, **Lumaaq**) reveal an attraction to legend, has created a convincing, self-contained world, and his finest film to date.

The world of Caroline Leaf’s **The Metamorphosis of Mr. Samsa** (Critic’s Prize: Best Film), is equally self-contained, but it is a closed, silent world, punctuated by sharp footfalls, knocks, and the thick, inarticulate voices of frightened people. Adapted from Kafka’s **Metamorphosis**, this horrifying story of a man who awakes one morning to find himself a dungbeetle, is compressed, airless and filled with waiting; on one side of the bedroom door lies the now-inhuman son, on the other sit the stunned, hostile family. Animating in sand, Leaf has abandoned the first-person narrator for a less subjective point of view and though one may keenly regret losing this bug eye on the world in the one art form that could conceivably visualize it, the exhilarating, uncanny shifts of perspective that result are ample compensation. This daring stylistic manoeuvre, comparable to a

disembodied eye exploring a collapsing set, is Leaf's richest gift to animation: in one three-second sequence, the gaze is swept from the insect, slid under the door, lifted across the living room, to finally twist back of the mother's head, and end in a close-up of her knotted bun – this web of thick black lines. If the film suffers at all it is from being almost too abstract, too chiaroscuro, unlightened with dialogue as was *The Street*, or broken into the clearly divided planes – the snow and the sea – of *The Owl and the Goose*. But style expresses subject and at the end, when the possibility of logic is swallowed up by the blackness, there is only the sense of a powerful, disturbing vision.

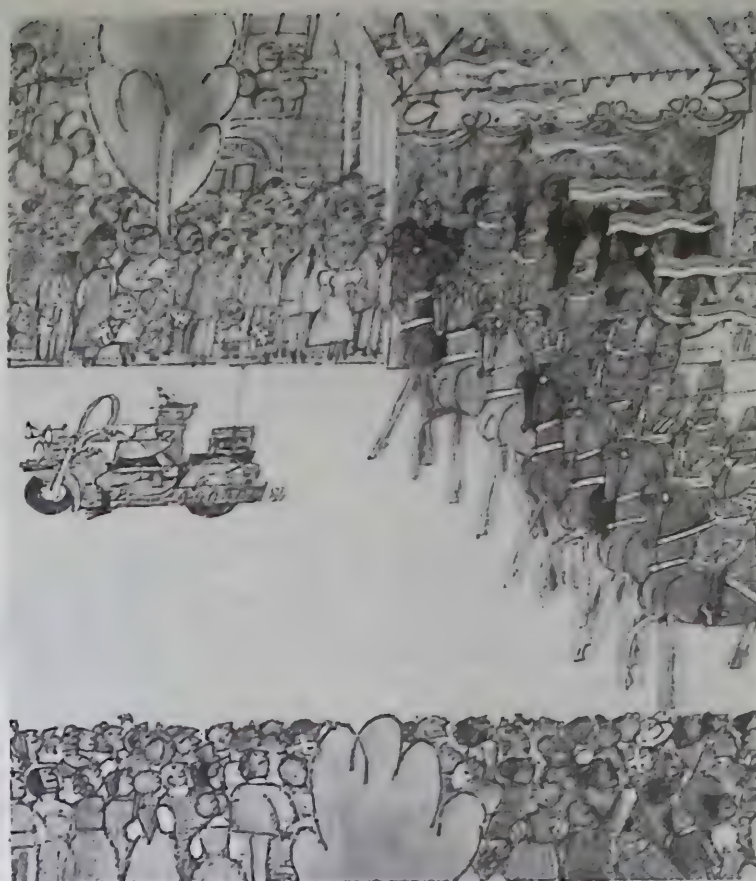
Perhaps some of the intensity of the film reflects circumstances: originally undertaken with funding from the American Film Institute, it became a three-year project, and something of a struggle to complete. Unable to interest the NFB in the project (they will now distribute the film), Miss Leaf worked on it at home, frequently fearing – so she expressed at a press conference – that she would lose track of the flow. This concern also reflects her working approach, as she “starts with a strong image and builds out in both directions”. A story-board is rare. She works from a “rough plan that changes a lot” which enables her to “work the sand in a more painterly way”. This is clearly an essential element of her style as the “whirling” effects are entirely done with animation; no camera is moved.



The kinaesthetic Bead Game

Ishu Patel's *The Bead Game*, is all movement; for six-and-a-half minutes, the story of human evolution is perceived as constant metamorphosis. Drifting, shooting, devouring, melting, whirling beads of light provide a kinaesthetic excitement difficult to convey in words, but impossible to resist on viewing. The fluidity of the images – crystal clear eruptions of color, hypnotically paced – scarcely suggests Patel's rigorous technique. Throughout four months he worked on a sheet of glass covered with 2mm of plastecine which was scraped away to allow the light patterns to emerge. An NFB animator since 1971, Indian-born Patel, whose *Perspectrum* (1975) was seen at Ottawa '76, brings a unique eye for pattern to a style of animation usually reserved for computer.

Ian Birnie is education officer in charge of media programs at the Art Gallery of Ontario. During the winter of 1975-76 he organized and exhibited a major animation series at the Art Gallery Theatre which included over 200 films, both an international selection and a remarkable Hollywood retrospective.



Taratata: The Parade

Three films do not a festival make... or do they? In some sense there is no choice: after 5 solid nights of screenings, often lasting until one a.m., a handful of films stay lodged in the memory, the rest fade. And one chooses to let them go, not because they lack interest, but because of an irony that arises from the density of the medium with its concentrated information: when a film works it often seems very simple; when it misses, it appears incredibly complex. Perhaps additional viewings will unravel the complexities of three films that were very much part of Canada's “best national selection”.

The Revenge of Objects, by Pierre Veilleux, is a free-wheeling portrait of the bruised life in rue St. Laurent. The excellent animation, ripe color and outrageous humor, fail to mask a disturbing ambivalence to the subject. In *Taratata: The Parade*, by Frederick Back, cut-out animation is brought into neat formation for a gentle look at a parade from a small boy's imaginative perspective. The film has a sure touch but the pastel color and unabashed sentimentality keep it at picture book distance. *No Apple for Johnny* has a great subject – the diary of an apprentice teacher – but fails crucially where it matters most: at script level. Author/animator John Weldon's overly pragmatic approach to the narrative limits the animation to illustrations (they are very handsomely done) and forces the humor.

In closing, let me mention two films shown out of competition; well-done, though slight, they serve to illustrate the range of festival submissions. Veronika Soul's *A Said Poem* sent by in a flash – which is part of the fun – but this collage accompaniment to John Columbo's ‘found poetry’ remains on the level of stylistic experiments and only suggests this independent animator's accomplishments with more developed material. I've saved what may be the most fully Canadian entry for last: a *CBFT Station Identification “Winter”*, by Société Radio-Canada so deftly transformed summer country grasslands into mounds of snow glistening under inky skies that for the entire one-minute and 5-seconds of running time, France, in June, vanished. The power of animation should never be underestimated. □

From Toronto to Fiji to Australia and L.A., Don Owen gives us his reflections on his trip and his own filmmaking: like a page from his diary...

to oz and back

by Don Owen



Butch Owen and the Sundance Spry discover Australia.

After a stopover in Hawaii (the Disneyland of the Pacific) and Fiji (where the Indian immigrant population outstrips the Fijian making the island seen like a fragment torn off the Indian continent), arrived in Sydney wiped out, to be greeted by the headlines everywhere "Margaret and Pierre Split". It all seemed to sum up too readily the crisis of our own country.

The Sydney Festival screenings are in the evenings because most of its large local audience works during the day. In style it is more like a film society providing a retrospective of last year's festivals hits. The audience, mainly young and vaguely arty, seem locked in a time warp: English Labour Party 1960. If a man in working clothes strikes a man in a suit the audience cheers!

The hit of the festival is Peter Watkins' **Edvard Munch** which is more personal and romantic than his usual work. Excellent use of sound overlap and colored filters. Also an excellent solution to the problem of dealing with historical material by treating it in a more intimate and personal way. Obviously Watkins identified totally with Munch and this gives it a vigor it would not otherwise have had. Unrelenting in its view of the artist-sufferer, it somehow fails to mention the matter of money in all of its more than three-hour pursuit of Munch from birth to death. Watkins himself seems a Kafkaesque character haunted by all kinds of fears and suspicions, especially of some kind of conspiracy against his work. However, as we get to know him better, find him witty and charming, able to see himself with a certain irony.

Australia is an interesting perspective from which to view Canada. Where so many of its films deal with the historical past, practically none of ours do. Where its history has become almost mythological, ours has been overshadowed by the more colorful American mythology. Australians share our paranoia about America and yet ironically, they suffer from an isolation that is like a great national wound. We're too near and they're too far.

But perhaps because of their isolation, Australian society is more defined than Canadian, thus their filmmakers are able to be more specific about the society they live in. There's no hedge, as in Canada, in the interests of making a bigger sale. Instead of film being a means of discovering who we are, our socially anonymous films diffuse our already filmy identity. In Australia there is a regional pride and rivalry that celebrates the many facets of the Australian character. Their state governments, unlike our provincial governments, put up a sizeable share of the film budgets. There is a greater commitment from the top to an indigenous film industry.

But there are haunting similarities to Canada, mainly in certain remnants of a colonial mentality. Same institutions, theirs beginning with an "A" and ours with a "C". Same hangovers from the days when the English foreign office took a paternal interest in the cultural life of the colonies. The major distribution and exhibition chains in Australia are American and British owned, and there is a great deal of paranoia on the part of the filmmakers that their films won't be seen by Australian audiences. Sound familiar?

Still, there's a sense that the Australian audiences are quite enthusiastic about their home-grown product. We were reminded of the enthusiasm of the audiences of Quebec for the works of their own filmmakers, and wondered whether once the novelty wears off (as it has in Quebec apparently), the audience will go back to demanding straight American-style entertainment.

Why can't we have both? Isn't it possible to make films that reflect our society with real insight but that also have solid entertainment value? One of the problems with this is that to get the audience into the theatres, you seem to need a major star. But somebody who spent the last 10 years living and working in Hollywood has lost any "Canadian" qualities of character and probably has little insight into the Canadian situation. You really have to live in Canada to know the anguish of it.

Of course, a clear sense of ourselves is necessary if we want to remain an independent cultural entity. Quebecers say that part of the problem is that we don't know who we are so the dialogue is on a poor level. They don't want to know us because we won't know ourselves.

But another Canadian pitfall has been remedied by the Australians: they have unified the Australian Film Commission (like the Canadian Film Development Corporation) and Film Australia (like the National Film Board) under one administration, along with the Film School and the government distribution network. They don't have the problem that we do in Canada where the heads of our various institutions barely speak to each other and certainly never exchange creative ideas.

As the Festival is mainly at night, spent a lot of time walking around Sydney – a very beautiful city, the harbour and its bays endlessly varied, vistas of red-tiled roofs and tropical vegetation; Australians open, very friendly; general atmosphere a weird combination of California and England. We were taken around to several of Sydney's many fine restaurants. Surprised to find how good Australian wine has become, and that Australians, traditionally beer-drinkers, now consume large quantities of their own white wine. Also amazed by a trip to the zoo where the animals seem like something from another planet entirely. Such unique ecology could support their search for greater cultural definition, just as our similarity to the Americans is supported in that we share so much of the same landscape.

One of the great pleasures of this trip is to spend some time with Robin Spry. Some rash talk about the exploitive aspects of the documentary. When you make a film about someone, aren't you in fact ripping them off? So-called primitive people often don't want to be photographed. They seem to know instinctively that it involves a diminishing of natural spontaneity. That's one of the attractions of making 'story' films. You create a fiction and use actors who have chosen this mode of action as their fate.

It was fun being a visiting culture hero – whisked around in official AFC limousines, radio and television interviews, pictures in the newspapers, wine and dined at the best restaurants. One elegant lady at a party practically ravaged me on the spot – great for my vanity until I realized that she was just suffering from a severe case of the Australian isolation and I was for her only an exotic presence from the outside world!

Ego problem: seeing Robin Spry's film **One Man** in Sydney and thinking how much better it was than **Partners**. The audience loved it. It works better as a structure, I thought. Got very defensive and apologetic about **Partners**. **One Man** is a lovely film combining tense scenes of violence with moments of exquisite human feeling, all delivered in a plot that does not falter. When I stopped being uptight over the greater success of a former protégé, I was able to be pleased with the triumph of a friend. Later in Melbourne where **Partners** received a larger and more auspicious screening and was well received by an attentive audience, I stopped apologizing for it. Then seeing my films at the Retrospective gave me a new perspective on their quality and searching diversity and especially on how Canadian they really were.

*Director Don Owen, whose latest feature **Partners** was part of a retrospective of his works shown at the Sydney Film Festival, is presently working on a new script in California.*

How do you relate to a work of yours that everyone says is a failure? You can ignore the criticism but at the cost of cutting off your own growth. You have got to face up to your failures, learn from them and then get on with it.

A new work is the best answer to your critics. There, you can insist on your shortcomings and turn them into virtues. This doesn't mean making the same mistakes over again, but developing ideas that did work, further, and in defining yourself more clearly. Even if it doesn't fit into the current fashionable jargon or prejudices.

So, on the way back from Australia, after a brief stopover in New Zealand and Tahiti, am spending some time here in L.A. Days writing (*Greenhouse Blues* is gradually becoming something else entitled *Mr. and Ms.*). Evenings seeing old friends and making new ones. You can learn a lot about filmmaking just by being surrounded by so much concern and love for it. I mean, people here eat, drink, sleep, work and talk *movies* endlessly. I find it very freeing and inspiring and the new script is going really well for the first time.

In its weird way of being at once very up-to-date and haunted by the ghosts of the past, there is a heated discussion in the Hollywood press about the *auteur* theory of filmmaking. It all revolves around whether Frank Capra is the author of his great films or whether he was only as good as the writer he was working with. Strangely, in the heat of discussion that followed by way of angry letters to the editor, the contribution of the actor was never mentioned. Strange because the genius of Hollywood, it seems to me, has always been to find those luminous archetypes that made the films vibrate. Unable to sleep, flipping through the channels in a



Hollis McLaren, Owen and Andra Sheffer (right) talk with Natalie Miller, member of the Victoria Film Commission.

3 a.m. dark night of the soul, no matter how skilled the story or pointed the direction, it is those luminous beings that we stop to watch: Spencer Tracy, Hepburn, Bogart, Bacall, Gary Cooper etc.

One of the tragedies of our film industry is that no sooner have we discovered and developed one of these talents, than they leave immediately for Hollywood where they quickly become imbued with a new cultural identity.

Now, after a month in Australia and a month here in L.A., I'm getting a real hankering to return to Canada. Is this true love or is it masochism?

The following text, a resumé of the Australian situation sent to us by the Australian information service, shows just how similar the film promotion experiences are in our two countries.



"Australia Now Recognised as a Film-Producing Nation"

Australia is known throughout the world as having an ebullient film industry and being the source of quality movies, according to the chairman of the Australian Film Commission (AFC), Mr Ken Watts.

Mr Watts believes Australia no longer has to promote the industry as a whole. He and other APC officers recently returned to Australia from sales efforts in Europe and the United States, which included the Cannes Film Festival.

The AFC is an umbrella organisation for the film industry in Australia, financed by the Federal Govern-

ment. It invests in film projects, helps to promote and distribute them and makes television and documentary films through its production arm, Film Australia.

Mr Watts said that after two years' participation at Cannes and at other festivals and markets, Australia's reputation was well established.

"In the future we will be able to go places like Cannes, concentrating our efforts on individual products rather than having to make people aware of the existence of an Australian film industry," he said. "The reputation we have established can be a springboard for Australian producers to make overseas sales."

Fifteen Australian films were shown at this year's Cannes Festival. Advances, sales and advance guarantees from the Festival totalled \$A600,000.

AFC's director of marketing and distribution, Mr Alan Wardrope, said that if sales followed the same trend as after last year's Cannes Festival, they could reach \$A2,000,000 in the next nine months.

The main interest in Australian films came from Canada, Scandinavia, West Germany and Italy.

The Australians were surprised that lower-budget films were the most successful. These included Australia's first animated feature, *Dot and the Kangaroo*, Tom Cowan's *Journey Among Women* and Brian Trenchard-Smith's action film *Deathcheaters*.

The South Australian Film Corporation's *Storm Boy*, grossing well in Australia, did particularly good business at Cannes.

"This was a restatement of the fact that dollars don't necessarily make good movies," Mr Wardrope said. "It was a lesson to us."

Mr Wardrope also returned to Australia convinced there is a world shortage of good product.

"What we were all talking about a few years ago, is now a reality," he said. "Because of the slowdown in production in other countries, it is an opportune time for Australian films in overseas markets.

"In the United States, some films are being re-run for the fifth time. Cinemas are closing down and some American distributors are banding together to make their own films to beat the shortage.

"However, I think we must have films with universal themes. In the past this has occurred by accident rather than by design in Australia. International sales are now imperative for the survival of the Australian industry.

"With costs rising, Australian producers can no longer expect to make a profit on home distribution alone."

Mr Wardrope's assertion is backed up by Mr Watts, who feels that though each country develops its own style, the most successful films in the future will be those with universal themes that "Happen to be shot in Australia".

He also reported great interest from European and British producers in making co-productions in Australia.

"I think that with the Europeans the projects would be simple co-financing arrangements," Mr Watts said. "They are looking for new ideas and new locations."

Moves were underway for a film co-production agreement with Britain, he said.

After his talks in London, discussions would be held with producers and trade unions in Australia. When these were completed a delegation from Britain would come to Australia, or an Australian group would go to Britain.

While in London, Mr Watts also had talks with the former Prime Minister, Sir Harold Wilson.

Sir Harold is heading the interim board working towards the establishment of a film authority in Britain.

Mr Watts said Sir Harold had been extremely interested in the role and operations of the AFC in relation to the Australian film industry.

by **Trevor Murrell**
Canberra, AUSTRALIA



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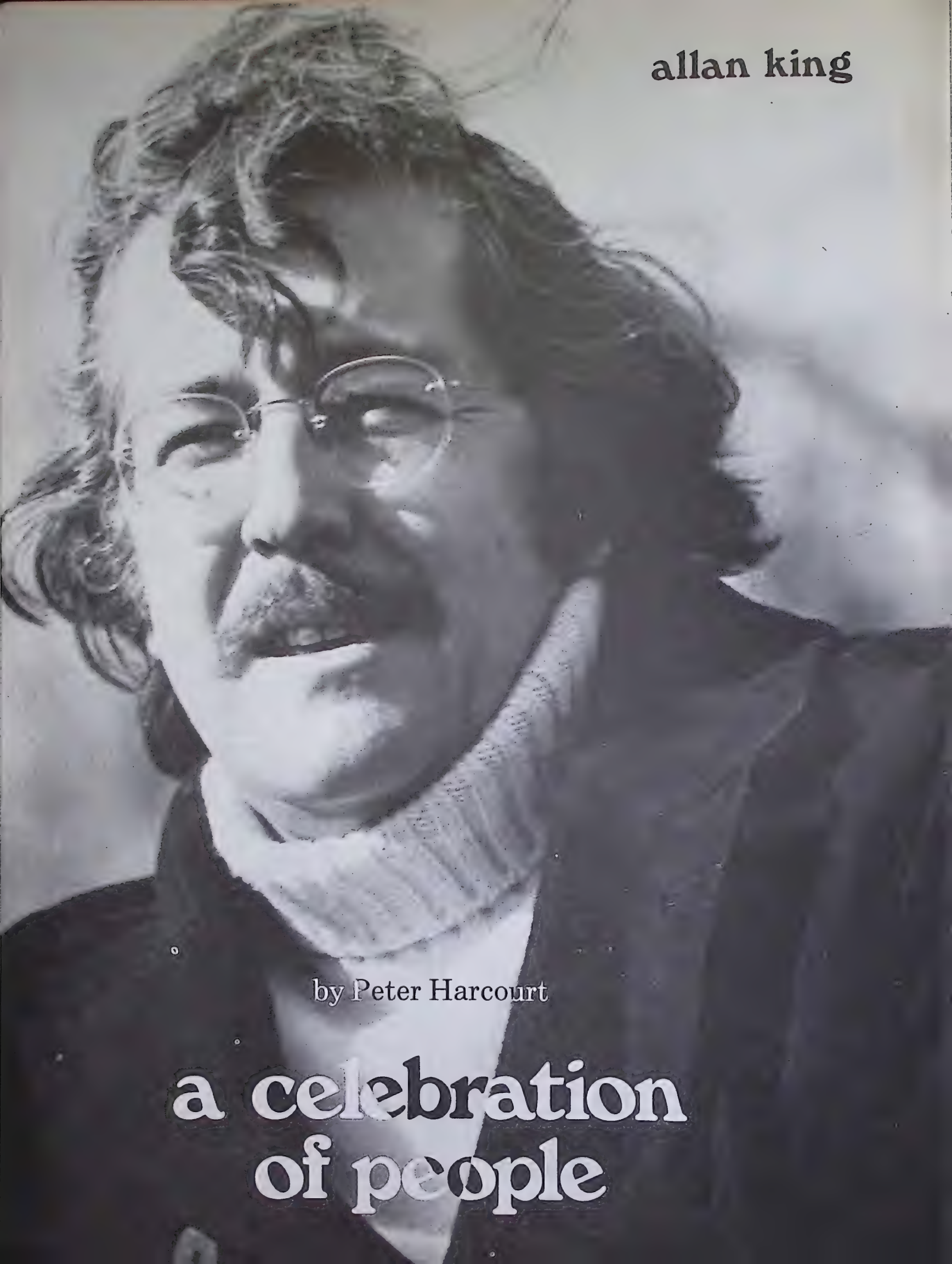
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A black and white portrait of Allan King, a man with curly hair, glasses, and a mustache, wearing a dark jacket and a light-colored turtleneck. He is looking slightly to the left with a slight smile. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape.

allan king

by Peter Harcourt

**a celebration
of people**

In late September, Allan King's feature *Who Has Seen the Wind* will be released. Peter Harcourt takes this chance to look back over King's other films as well to give us a critical portrait of one of Canada's most accomplished filmmakers.

by Peter Harcourt

*"I suppose that the stream that runs through most of the things I respond to is a sense of feeling, of warmth about people, a celebration of people, a sense of humanity."*¹

Published in 1947, W.O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen The Wind* is a loving evocation of the growth of a young boy's consciousness, of his awareness of the cycle of nature and his gradual recognition of the mystical meanings of life and death. In an oblique way, a pantheistic way, the novel is deeply religious. It is concerned with the forces that animate things, both nature and people. It is aware of the invisible. It acknowledges the wind.

In 1977, *Who Has Seen The Wind* also became a film, adapted by Patricia Watson and directed by Allan King. One of the remarkable achievements of this adaptation is that, in this most visual of media, they have managed to convey this sense of the invisible by moments of speechlessness. The film is full of wide-eyed glances, of silent interrogations—as if trying to come to grips with the significance of things. Largely, of course, these glances belong to Brian (an astonishing performance by Brian Painchaud); but they also are received by both his mother (Chapelle Jaffe) and his father (Gordon Pinsent), and they are shared by Digby (Thomas Hauff), by the open-eyed trust with which he greets the world.

In this way, the film implies more than it can say. Even the sullen resentment of the Young Ben (Douglas Junor) is conveyed through his body and his eyes. He has almost no lines at all in the film. Admirers of the novel may, in fact, be amazed at how little dialogue has been added. For all of Mitchell's imagery, for all the interpretative function of his prose, Patricia Watson and Allan King have found visual equivalents.

Who Has Seen The Wind is set in the '30s — a world of hard times, of depression and drought. In the last ten years, this has become a fashionable decade for the movies. There have been a number of films that depict that time. But with a difference. In Hollywood, films like *Bound For Glory*, *Thieves Like Us*, and *Bonnie & Clyde*, while their *décor* is authentic, their thinking is modern. Especially in *Bonnie & Clyde* which, with all its New Deal posters and sense of dusty streets, is the most meticulous of them all, the gestures are totally contemporary. Warren Beattie and Faye Dunaway, while playing characters from the '30s, speak directly to our own times. They appeal to our growing suspicion about the processes of the law and to the value we now place on individual freedom.

In *Who Has Seen The Wind*, there is none of this. With his short hair and clear blue eyes, Thomas Hauff as Digby radiates the idealism that seems so characteristically Canadian — particularly in the past. King has used these eyes in a similar way in his adaptation for television a couple of years ago of Barry Broadfoot's *Six War Years*. In this

play, it is the same idealistic innocence that projected the Hauff character so willingly into the war. Both in *Six War Years* and in *Who Has Seen The Wind*, Thomas Hauff seems totally the incarnation of those past times. So it is with everyone in *Who Has Seen The Wind*. There is nothing that seems out-of-period in their gestures or attitudes.

This is both a distinction and, possibly, a limitation. Audiences might find the film too idealistic, too trusting in the natural processes of life to be able to believe that that was how it was in those days. Whether consciously or not, audiences might also be disquieted by its comparative lack of protest. Mitchell's pantheism blurs somewhat the social and political implications of the town's persecution of the Chinese family and of both the Bens. Like the kitten that dies in the litter or the runt pig that ought to be destroyed (as both the novel and the film might seem to be saying), Nature has its rejects as part of its wholeness. While certain characters do protest — principally Digby and Miss Thomson (Helen Shaver) — the ambiance of the whole is more philosophical than political, urging us towards mysticism and towards an acceptance of "God's ways".

This idealism in the film, this self-effacing acceptance, is not just fidelity to the original story. There is something of this quality in nearly all of King's work. But in *Who Has Seen The Wind*, Mitchell's prairie world of the '30s is presented to us with an admirable accuracy. The reconstruction of Arcola where the film was shot (a reconstruction which the townspeople were pleased to accept), the circus posters, auction-sale announcements, period gas-pumps, and Bee Hive Corn Syrup cans combine with those trusting faces, with the expressive speechlessness of their eyes, to create within the film a warmly affirmative experience — an experience rare for our times.

The trust and love within the film is largely carried by Brian Painchaud as Brian. It is his consciousness of the world around him which becomes our consciousness of the film. But miraculously cast, Brian often has a sense of tiredness about his eyes — as if in advance of knowing it, all the questions he asks about life finally will have no satisfactory answer.

In this way, *Who Has Seen The Wind* is a meditative film. Like the novel it actualizes, it asks us to contemplate the meaning of human life and the formation of human values. And Eldon Rathburn's musical score assists this contemplation. For those of us who know his work, largely for the National Film Board, many of his devices will sound reassuringly familiar. But they are effective nevertheless. Plucked strings and a Jew's harp help to create the boys' excitement as they prepare for their gopher hunt; and at one point in the film, when Brian walks off into the prairie to spend the night alone under the stars, a solo horn and widely-spaced strings beautifully evoke the landscape's infinite vastness and a sense of awe.

Even more than the book, Allan King's *Who Has Seen The Wind* centers this prairie world within the consciousness of Brian. In this way, the film becomes a distinguished example of what is really a Canadian genre: films that create the world through the eyes of a young child. Claude Jutra's *Mon Oncle Antoine* and Francis Mankiewicz's *Le temps d'une chasse* immediately spring to mind; but *Lions for Breakfast* and *Lies My Father Told Me* work in much the same way. If we extend the age to take in young people, then the list of films is enormous — in terms of richness and productivity, virtually the Canadian equivalent of the American Western!

If *Who Has Seen the Wind* is characterized by directness and simplicity, these qualities (which are also in the novel and can be found in different ways in other films by Allan King), finally, are focussed through Brian. Most of the world created for us is presented through his eyes — questioning the values of the life and death around him, trying to make

Peter Harcourt, author of Six European Directors (Penguin, 1974) and Movies & Mythologies (CBC, 1977) teaches film at York University.

sense of it all but drawing no conclusions. Conclusions (if there are any) would belong to another world, a more and more sophisticated world – a world closer to our own times.

*"Certainly, in the past at any rate, it's been very much part of my character to be unsure, to be very careful; it's difficult for me to be very forthright emotionally and even forthright in talking in a general way. I'm not sure how much of it is a desire to be covert or how much of it is a simple confusion in my own head about what I feel or what I think."*²

Who Has Seen The Wind marks a new stage in Allan King's career; for until very recently, King has not been known as a director of dramatic features. Like other Canadian filmmakers, he began in documentary. Working out on the West Coast in the late '50s and early '60s, King produced a number of shorts for the CBC that earned him his initial reputation. **Skid Row** (1956), **Rickshaw** (1960), **A Matter of Pride** (1961), and **Bjorn's Inferno** (1964) established the credentials that allowed King to do a variety of items for the CBC, as well as to set up production offices in London, England. It was about this time, however, that King began to conceive for himself more challenging projects, moving slowly but surely towards a form which, more than anybody else, Allan King invented – the actuality drama.

The actuality drama is a mixture of documentary and fiction. By-passing the conventional ingredients of script and actors, it takes actual people in actual situations but then shapes the material so that it becomes both something more and something less than that – a film by Allan King. The purest example of this way of working is **A Married Couple**, made in 1969. But before that there was an interesting predecessor – virtually an invisible predecessor because it has been seen by so few people. The film was made for the CBC in 1964 and is called **Running Away Backwards** or **Coming of Age in Ibiza**. In some ways, it is one of the most interesting films that King has ever made.

It is interesting because it is so naive and embarrassing – so uncertain about what its values really are. In this way, it takes risks. **Running Away Backwards** tells the story of a group of Canadians "living it up" in Ibiza – trying to "find themselves" away from the insipidities of day-to-day Canadian life. This ambition in itself is more than a little naive; yet it is a project that more than a handful of Canadians have felt obliged to go through.

Running Away Backwards offers a dilemma for the spectator. Is it a naive and embarrassing film about a bunch of Canadians sensitive to the uncertainties of their own identities? Or is it a sensitive and uncertain film about a bunch of naive and embarrassing Canadians who are escaping the demands of maturity by running away to Ibiza? To pose this riddle is to comment on the way that Allan King works as a director. The directors we most know about, whom we talk about as *directors*, are generally those that impose a particular vision of the world upon whatever material they handle. Hitchcock, Bergman, Hawks, Antonioni – even Don Shebib – all have a view of life that is developed in one way or another, from film to film. They often have as well a recognizable style – or at least, a repertoire of stylistic effects that we learn to associate with the work of each director.

With Allan King, however, these matters are more elusive. There have been, to be sure, some thematic pre-occupations. From **Skid Row** through **Warrendale** (1967) to **Come On Children** (1973), King has repeatedly concerned himself with social outcasts, with characters who cannot adjust to the conventions that our society lays down as normal. This



Going topsy-turvy while **Running Away Backwards**.

theme is also present in **Running Away Backwards**, even though these pampered, middle-class people have melodramatically chosen their outcast state. But more important than theme is King's attitude, his attitude as a filmmaker. I would want to characterize this attitude as one of self-effacement. Rather than impose himself on his material, Allan King tries as far as possible to let his material speak for itself. Whether the immense formality with which he interviews his winos at the time of **Skid Row** or his scrupulous fidelity to the original text in **Who Has Seen The Wind**, as a director King tends to make himself invisible, as if absent from his own films.

In this way, Allan King is arguably the most Bazinian of directors. André Bazin believed that it was the cinema's chief privilege to be able to record directly a pre-existing reality. Thus he preferred the extended takes of William Wyler to the subjective camera tricks of Alfred Hitchcock; and he valued the grainy, newsreel quality of the early films of Rossellini over the conceptual editing that has been so much talked about in Eisenstein. I believe, had he lived to see them, Bazin would have also valued the films of Allan King.

Of course, King is not *actually* absent from his own films! But he does stand back in a way, whether through respect or from timidity. This is what makes **Running Away Backwards** such a challenging film to deal with. Essentially, it is about discontent – the discontent of over 1,000 ex-patriots that are seeking a "cure" in Ibiza. They are attempting to gain some health from a more primitive civilization where there is still some harmony between its citizens and their landscape, where there is still a human pace and scale to life. Yet, as the old Spaniard explains it towards the end of the film, these Canadians are all spectators, unable to understand. "Words which have disappeared from your dictionaries are still meaningful here," as he explains.

In this way, throughout the film, the search is presented as both futile and necessary – as a stage one must go through. So it is the rhetorical Jake who leaves at the end because he has seen the limitations of the histrionic self-assertions that this new world has allowed him; while Hank, who has resisted the idleness and sexual freedom that characterizes this ex-patriot community, is left behind – supposedly to do some “grad work” on himself with the young blonde who seems both to attract and frighten him, offering a challenge which, at least in those days, Canadians found hard to deal with on their own soil!

Looked at today, the film contains a lot of nonsense. Yet I know it is a nonsense that felt real to many of us of that '50s generation. On a personalized, existential plain, the film registers a rejection. Yet unlike our existential leaders to the south, unlike Norman Mailer, Ernest Hemingway, and Henry Miller, in **Running Away Backwards**, there seems no espousal. There is no sense of politics and no concern at all with cultural analysis. One simply spends one's time away, “like children playing in a Roman church,” as that old Spaniard put it, and then one goes home again, no doubt to “earn a buck”, having dabbled in sex and art.

The film, then, also registers an immaturity – an immaturity which is part of the sense of embarrassment that the film can cause but is also part of its quality. It is as if Allan King and his associates had the initiative to make explicit some of the adolescent over-assertions that certainly were felt by many Canadians of that generation but which few of us would have had the courage to express so openly. In this way, the film becomes a document of a certain class of Canadian self-evaders, seeking escape from the monied rat-race but finally so dependant upon it that inevitably they are drawn back. Running away backwards, as the film is called: people aware of an absence, of something their life has denied them, yet only able to affirm it in the most juvenile of ways.

“If you have a sensitive, intelligent, quiet, responsive, unobtrusive and unjudging, impersonally critical cameraman or camera crew, then not only is the camera not inhibitive, but it stimulates the (people) to talk, in the same way an analyst or therapist does. You can talk if you want to; you don't have to talk if you don't want to; you do what you want.”⁴

The same attitude and problems are present in the next three major films that Allan King directed (in between doing bread & butter items, largely from London, for the CBC): **Warrendale** (1967), **A Married Couple** (1969), and **Come On Children** (1973). Each film represents a distinguished example of King's early way of working. They are not “just” documentaries but they are not quite dramatic fiction either; and like **Running Away Backwards**, all three films leave us feeling a bit uneasy at the end.

Both **Warrendale** and **Come On Children** concern themselves directly with adolescents, with young people who have come to feel that they live outside society. **Warrendale** explores the “holding” therapy devised by John Brown for the treatment of emotionally disturbed children – a treatment which (in the film) involves a mixture of extreme caring and something that looks like violence; while **Come On Children** takes a group of “disaffected young people from the suburbs of Toronto” (as the opening title explains it) and set them up on a farm where they are allowed, perhaps encouraged, to “do their own thing.”

Of the two films, **Warrendale** is the more disturbing – as much because of the therapy as the filmmaking. In this way, like other films by Allan King, the experience of watching it

throws us away from the film *as a film* and out into a discussion of the material it contains.

Yet the film is not neutral. Nor is the fact of filming in such an environment without its effect upon the kids. Young Tony, especially, who, throughout the film is constantly telling everybody to “Fuck off!” – a touch of realism that kept the film off the grandmotherly CBC – at one point looks directly at the camera and asks, as if to us, “Why do I swear all the time?” I don't think it is hard to find an answer. Like other people in the film (though to a lesser degree), he is aware of his “performance”.

But the film is remarkable for the environment it creates – both topographical and psychological. The Warrendale clinic looks indeed like a warren of dwellings placed in a mud and rubble wasteland – a suburban nightmare which, in itself, couldn't help but increase the sense of isolation that all the children feel. In a way then, not dissimilar from the attitudinizing adults in **Running Away Backwards**, the kids are cut off from what might be their real culture – from their actual homes in some sort of city dwellings, hopefully more humane than this setting we see them in. While I have neither the space nor the competence to fully discuss the implications of this therapy, it is disturbing to say the least.

I can see its virtues – the virtues of confrontation. The kids are not allowed to retreat into themselves. When they shout or get violent, they are shouted back at in return and held firmly by caring arms. But sometimes this holding involves as many as three adults at a time for just one child. And the kids are expected to verbalize everything. Tony must explain why he resents Terry's bad breath; and Carol must rationalize her resentment of Walter – the fact that she misses him because he is rarely there. Now is this loving force or emotional rape? This is the question that the film leaves unanswered.

The film finds its centre in the death of Dorothy, the cook – one of those “happy accidents” in filmmaking that allow the filmmakers to shape their material towards a climax. But even this, considering the nature of the event and the public way it is announced, with all the kids gathered together and the camera ready to roll, is somewhat disturbing.

But as a film, **Warrendale** is important largely because it leaves us with all these problems. It confronts us directly, both with the validity of the therapy, and with the ethics of filmmaking. Once again in his life, Allan King has taken on a project that many more cautious people would have shied away from.

Come On Children is organized in much the same way, except that there is no “happy accident”. One of the girls has a baby, but this isn't dwelt upon; one of the guys shoots up speed. Another lad, John Hamilton, really becomes the “star” of this film. Through his song-writing, he is also a kind of choric commentator. He is constantly playing the guitar and entertaining us with his stories and with all his unfocussed charm. A small confrontation occurs in this film when all the parents come up for a day. But even this is low key – a sad but basically unangry presentation of the generation gap of which these kids are so aware.

There were a number of films made at the end of the '60s, before the Youth generation gave way to what Tom Wolf has called the Me generation: Mort Ransen's **Christopher's Movie Matinee** and Jacques Godbout's **Kid Sentiment**, both made in 1968; and Claude Jutra's **Wow!** made the following year. In the context of these films, **Come On Children** is admirable both because of the respect it brings to these kids and because of the quiet rhythm that gradually establishes itself as the kids sit around and talk and sing and do not too much at all. And if the fact of intrusion seems less in this



One of the emotionally disturbed children at Warrendale.

film than in **Warrendale**, it is nevertheless made explicit at a couple of points in the film.

During an early sequence while two of the lads are eating breakfast, one of them becomes increasingly impatient with the fact he is being filmed, an impatience that becomes anger before our eyes. "You're fucking the shit outta me, man," he finally screams, putting his hand up before the camera. And towards the end of the film, as the kids are getting ready to leave, one of them is directly interviewed by King himself – a rare disruption for an Allan King film. "What are you going back to?" we hear King ask from behind the camera; and then a whole series of questions concerning what he is going to do, what he would like to do; if he went away, what he would do there; and so on. To each of these questions, in a pleasantly smiling but ultimately hopeless way, the young lad replies "Nothing." Nothing in the world as he has known it. "Maybe get with whatever's happening elsewhere," as he finally puts it.

Like so many of King's films, **Come On Children** presents people without a future, without a culture to sustain them, with no clear idea of what they exist in the world to do. The film plays off with John singing the well-known Dylan song which seems to sum up the feeling of them all:

*... I'm walkin' down that lonesome road, Babe,
Where I'm bound I cannot tell...*

Miraculously, however, King's discreet direction combines with the editing skills of Arla Saar to give this film where nothing happens a gently reflective rhythm and distinct shape of its own. It becomes a quiet kind of drama – a drama of nice kids who have a real respect for one another but who feel there is nothing to do and nowhere to go. It is no wonder that the film hasn't been seen. It would be too much like an accusation.

*"Some of the critics... felt that **A Married Couple** had no imagination or that it was somehow dull. I'm a little puzzled by the expectations for fantasy in film, for myth-making; it seems that if you can give people a comfortable fantasy or myth, it is easier for them to accept. If you say what you feel directly or show them the world as you experience it, this seems to cause difficulties."*⁵

Of all the films of this period, **A Married Couple** represents King's most dramatic achievement. However, like most other distinguished Canadian films within this system of ours controlled by American exhibition outlets, it hasn't been a great commercial success. Yet its influence has been considerable, most obviously on the American television series **An American Family** but also on the parliamentary documentation done in Britain by Roger Graef – one of the old team of Allan King Associates when they were based in London.

It is not exactly an *agreeable* film – unless you like to listen to people shouting at one another for the better part of an hour and a half. It is not a film that makes you wish you were married! But what is so extraordinary is that the couple which King found to consent to such a project, Billy and Antoinette Edwards, are both natural performers. They bring an energy to everything they do that makes for interesting material on the screen.

Seen nowadays, several years after it was made, the film seems like a study of oppression – largely of the man over the woman but also of all the members of the family by the structure of family life itself. As a family, the Edwards quantify everything. Nearly all their squabbles concern mo-

ney and the acquisition of material goods – a pair of \$40.00 shoes; a new shag rug; a gas stove for their re-modelled kitchen, a washer and dryer, a new hi-fi! Billy, in characteristic fashion, offers the classical male argument: since he makes most of the money, he has most of the rights – an argument that Antoinette strives constantly to resist.

As the Edwards depict it for us, in the edited version of their lives which we have on this film, married life is a struggle for dominance with all the cards stacked in favor of the male. Even their sex-life becomes part of this battle. Antoinette tries desperately to defend her right, when she feels like it, to sleep in her own bed. Talk between the Edwards seems like thrust and counter-thrust, with Antoinette's suggestions becoming more and more preposterous the more aggressively they are resisted by Billy. Like their opening argument about the harpsichord, for example, a scene that reads so tersely in transcription that it seems hard to imagine that it never was "written":

Antoinette: Where so you think we should put the harpsichord? Over there?

Billy: The harpsichord. I don't know. The same place we're gonna put the rock band. What harpsichord?

A: That I'm gonna buy.

B: You're not gonna buy a harpsichord.

A: Oh yes I am with part of my money.

B: Oh no, you're not gonna buy a harpsichord.

A: Yes, I'm gonna buy a musical instrument.

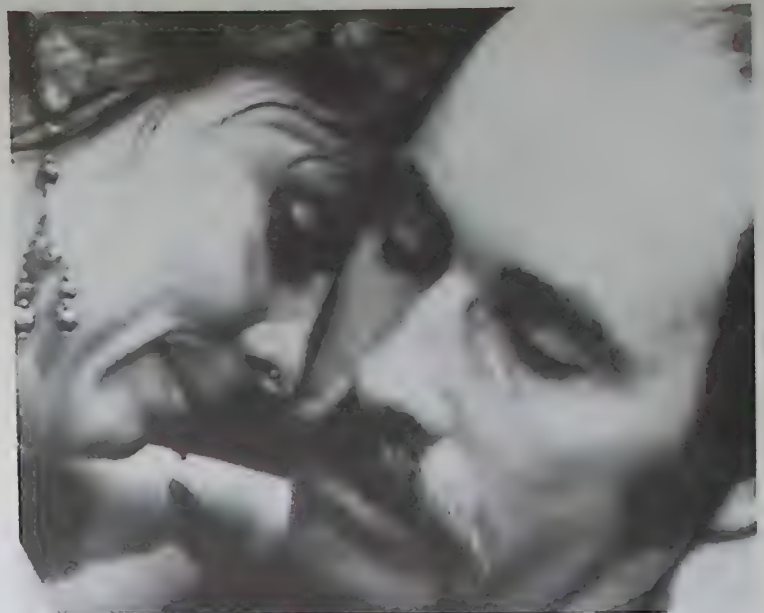
B (shouting): You're not gonna buy a harpsichord. And the reason you're not buying a harpsichord is because the harpsichord is a selfish instrument just for you. The money is gonna go to buying the things we absolutely need. What do we need a goddam harpsichord for?

A: How can I study voice again if I don't have a musical instrument?

B: You don't need a harpsichord. I'll get you a harmonica.

If there is rarely the sense of a genuine conversation between them, rarely the sense of speech as gentle exchange, the film is not without its moments of tenderness. Billy is often presented as playing with their son, Bogart, or fondling their dog, Merton. There is a lovely moment in the film when all four of them are sitting on the floor together, testing out their new hi-fi, and exchanging kisses with one another (even with Merton) and listening to that old Beatles recording of "Maria". Right after this scene, Billy and Antoinette are alone together, dancing to "I'd love to turn you on...", she all wrapped around him as they move together, the image somewhat fractured by the bevelled glass of the french doors that the cameraman Richard Leiterman, is shooting through. It is a most effective moment, I would argue, because the distance both suggests reticence on the part of the crew concerning this intimacy and, through the splitting up of the image, the scene also creates a pleasant visual effect.

A sadder, more tender moment occurs after a party sequence towards the end of the film. Antoinette has been flirting with some guy in a red shirt which (as the film is fictionalized in the editing) seems to have led to a sort of squabble between the Edwards, once they got home. In any case, after the party, the film picks them up in close-up, cuddling on the sofa. Antoinette is crying and talking quietly to Billy – possibly the most tender talk in the film. But we can't hear what they are saying. A record they are listening to (one of Sarastro's arias from *The Magic Flute*) erases their speech from the sound-track. Although the scene actually happened this way when they were shooting it, this effect again suggests reticence on the part of the filmmakers. It also forces us to deal purely visually with the significance of the scene.



• Antoinette and Billy Edwards in a rare quiet moment.

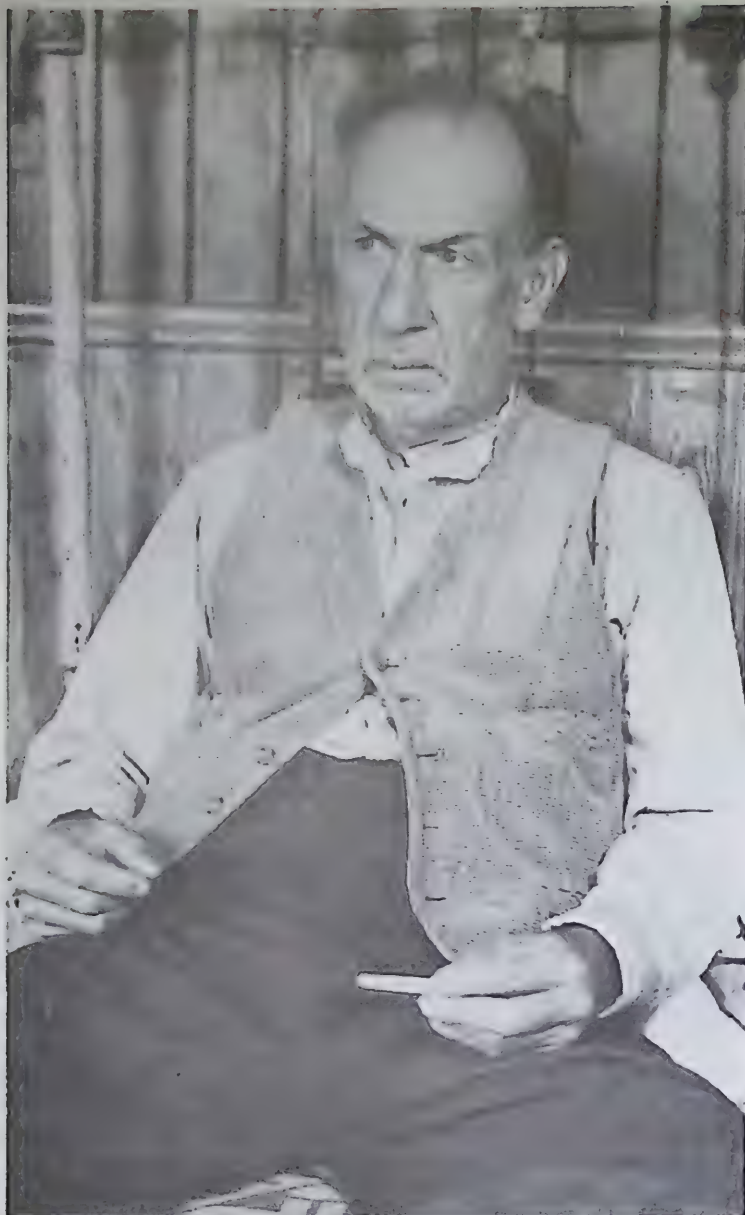
It is not an encouraging moment. Antoinette seems really disturbed, as if trying to reach Billy. But his face is largely turned away from her – as if like elsewhere in the film, in rejection of whatever she has to offer him. The scene ends with a dissolve to Antoinette alone in her own bed, cuddling her pillow. Then we cut to Billy, still downstairs, finishing off a drink and patting the dog.

A Married Couple is a most distinctive film. There is nothing quite like it anywhere else in the world. It is a frightening experience. Like all the other films of this "documentary" period, **A Married Couple** is also a film about exiles, about people cut off from a culture that might meaningfully sustain them. While there is no political analysis in any of King's films, they all add up to a statement that cries out for political interpretation. They are all about alienation. They present the separation of the individual from culture. Unless we are deeply pessimistic about life and accept all these problems as an unalterable aspect of "human nature", King's films all suggest the need for social change.

Whether King himself is aware of this, I do not know. His characters certainly aren't. Both Antoinette and Billy see nothing wrong within the institution of marriage as it exists, with their pursuit of the perfect home. The problems are all internalized. Both Billy's dominance and Antoinette's resentment are ritualized into the routines of marriage. At one point during one of their fights, Billy is explicit about this. "The framework isn't the problem," he cries out at her. "The laws of society are not the problem in this marriage. The problem is you and me. ... What we don't know is whether we really hate one another or not."

Like both **Warrendale** and **Come On Children**, like most of the early work of Allan King, **A Married Couple** is a film that, in spite of the fine shape that King and Arla Saar finally evolved for it, leads us away from the film as a film, out to talk about the problems it contains – the problem of marriage. And that statement of Billy's could provide a central point from which discussion might begin.

Although the film ends tenderly, it also ends with non-achievement – with Antoinette and Billy seeking the creature comforts of touching one another, of holding one another, but with nothing really resolved. We know that the next day, fresh squabbles will begin. The Edwards are trapped within their own image of themselves: middle-class consumers whose life values are as empty and non-sustaining as the silly Heintz commercials it is Billy's job to supervise. As the film presents them to us, the Edwards'



Jose Ferrer as old Ben in *Who Has Seen the Wind*.



Sean, Ab and Annie searching in *Who Has Seen the Wind*.

lives are as barren of human sustenance as the wasteland setting of **Warrendale** and as hopeless of a future as the end of **Come On Children**. It is not a comforting picture of our middle-class world.

I'd done most of what I wanted to do in documentary, simply as a technical form. I didn't see it shifting very much from there. Also, I had always used documentary essentially as a dramatic form. I've done essay films, but I've always been interested in stories about people. It was never practical in Vancouver where I started to do dramatic work. We didn't have the budgets. We didn't think we had the experience to work in that manner. So one made films about real people and told a story about them.

*In essence, the form of **Warrendale** is a dramatic structure; and with **A Married Couple**, it is directly a dramatic structure with two central characters. The fact that they're documentaries, for me, has always been coincidental. That was economically where I could work.*

Using actors and scripts has more control in many respects and also allows for a range of experience that is beyond the scope of individuals who are playing themselves. Also, I began to feel that I wanted that kind of control. I wanted to be able to work more directly in a dramatic form, with actors.⁶

Since the dissolution of his offices in London, and of his Toronto company after **Come On Children**, Allan King has been working increasingly for television, as indeed he has always done. But now with a difference. Since 1974, he has increasingly involved himself with drama, involving real scripts and real actors. In some ways, this work is more conventional than the work he has done in the past.

There are several reasons for this switch to drama, both financial and practical. Financially, in spite of their distinction, King's actuality dramas didn't make much money; and practically, through John Hirsch and the revitalization of television drama at the CBC, all of a sudden work in filmed drama became more of a possibility. There are other factors too that may have influenced him: his increased association with Patricia Watson, now both his colleague and his wife; plus his admiration for Toronto's little theatre – for directors like Paul Thompson and Martin Kinch and for playwrights like Carol Bolt, two of whose plays he has filmed.

In fact, his version of **Red Emma** (1976) has much of the old King quality about it. Helped by the constantly steady camera work of Edmund Long, King made what at times looks like a documentary of Kinch's stage production but which at other times seems like a film version of the play itself, with Kinch directing the actors and King his film crew. Kinch worked with King again for Rick Salutin's **Maria** (1976), a film about a young lady in a clothing factory who tries to organize a union. This time, however, Kinch is simply the dialogue coach and King is the director. It is as if, by these means, King has been training himself for the different sort of challenges that dealing with actors entails.

Among these television programs, the most innovative is **Six War Years** (1975), a video adaptation of Barry Broadfoot's oral history of the Second World War. Working directly on tape, King was able to superimpose close-ups of faces in color speaking directly to us over black-&-white newsreel footage of the war; and he also had a handful of faces in color speaking directly to us over black & - white



Reverend Powelly and Mrs. Abercrombie listen to the proceedings in *Wind*.

newsreel footage of the war; and he also had a handful of actors play out a variety of roles. Apparently influenced by Paul Thompson's work with the Theatre Passe Muraille, *Six War Years* might really be described as a piece of "epic" television – a Brechtian combination of direct statement and dramatic re-creation that simultaneously moved and informed us. Its achievement still represents one of the most **original** hours of television that I have seen anywhere in the world.⁷

Less satisfactory, to my mind, is King's direction of *Baptising* (1975), drawn from the story by Alice Munro. My own misgivings about this film centre basically on the music. While the story does connect young Del's dreams of romantic love with listening to opera, the decision to run operatic music over her later scenes of lovemaking has disquieting results. First of all, it gives to all these sequences an Elvira Madiganish sort of lyricism which is a cliché, to say the least. Secondly, the continued use of this music might imply that the *reality* of making love is still wrapped up with Del's dreams. It might suggest that she isn't learning anything, that she isn't growing up. But it is the point of the original story to illustrate the reverse.

Nevertheless, whatever my reservations, *Baptising* too provided a fine experience for its viewers within the opiate world of television. It certainly offered an excellent training ground for the greater challenges of *Who Has Seen The Wind*.

It is difficult at this stage to see where Allan King is going. Since *Who Has Seen The Wind*, King has already made a film version of Carol Bolt's *One Night Stand*, and I assume that he will go on working for the CBC. But he wants to make theatrical features; and even if, by his own past achievements, this means he is working in a more conventional mode, Allan King's artistic presence is still very much there.

While I have tried to do so intermittently throughout this article, the exact nature of this presence is still hard to characterize. It has to do with innocence and also with naivety – initially about the expected characteristics of the medium he was working in and, throughout his life, about the complexities of existence, especially when seen from a social/political point-of-view. But these twin characteristics are, arguably, what make his films so unmistakably Canadian, speaking from and to an Anglo-Saxon, middle-class culture which was at one time so dominant but which has become increasingly uncertain of itself since the Second World War. Related to this too is possibly King's lack of

self-assertion: in his documentary days, his respect for the reality he was filming; now in his drama days, his respect for the original text.

Thinking about King's achievement, I keep remembering Keats' notion of "negative capability" – an openness to experience which Keats believed essential for the receptivity of the artist. This, Allan King has in abundance – almost to a fault. Until *Who Has Seen The Wind*, King's major films have all been about rejects, about misfits within the society that contains them. But this subject matter is never analysed as such. The situations are simply presented to us, always with King's sensitivity and respect; but there is little in the films that might betray King's personal attitude.

Perhaps King's work on *Red Emma* and *Maria* might lead to a more direct awareness of the political issues which form a submerged dimension in all of his work. But if his films present characters with no culture to sustain them – culture in the anthropological sense of shared values and conventions – then this might well explain both King's attraction to and the achievement of *Who Has Seen The Wind*.

Who Has Seen The Wind depicts a re-creation of our past, a past where society was not vitiated by generation gaps and battles between the sexes, a world where – as Helen sings at the beginning of *Red Emma* – "all their lies were true." People believed in things: in the process of Nature, in the continuity of human life, in the necessity of self-sacrifice – as they did as well, more grimly, in *Six War Years*. The male-centered world of middle-class, Anglo-Saxon dominance had not yet been challenged nor made aware of its increasing inability to nurture its own children.

Furthermore, the formal tidiness of fiction must be attractive to King at this stage of his career; for fiction provides a stronger sense of order than is possible when working with the raw material of actuality footage, struggling after the event to find an order in the editing. Finally, the extraordinary feeling – both of sincerity and wholeness that characterizes every frame of *Who Has Seen The Wind* is all the more impressive because these qualities are the characteristics of a past that still had a strong sense of active community values, values that have virtually vanished from the suburban sprawl of our increasingly urbanized world – the setting of so many of King's previous films.

In this way, *Who Has Seen The Wind* seems like the complement of Allan King's previous work, as if rounding it off and bringing it to an end. But hopefully (if our audiences support this film), it is also a beginning. □

Notes

I would like to thank Allan King personally and his secretary, Christine Harris, for arranging for me to re-screen nearly all of these films.

1. From Allan King, an interview with Bruce Martin (Ottawa, The Canadian Film Institute, 1971), p. 14
2. *Ibid*, p. 1
3. See "Men of Vision" (on the films of Don Shebib) by Peter Harcourt in *Cinema Canada* No 32 (Oct. '76), pp. 35-40.
4. In *The New Documentary in Action: a casebook in Film Making*, by Alan Rosenthal (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1971), p. 29
5. In Allan King, an interview, p. 17
6. From a personal conversation with Allan King, recorded in July, 1977
7. I have already talked about this program in somewhat the same terms in "Frequent Hirschs: some reflections on TV drama after the third year of the CBC renaissance," in *Books in Canada*, Vol 5 No 4 (April '77), p. 14.

The above article will appear in a book on Canadian critical studies, edited by David Helwig, to be published by Oberon Press in the Spring of 1978. The book will also contain an article on Claude Jutra as well as studies on theatre and literature.

Reel Feelings at the Toronto



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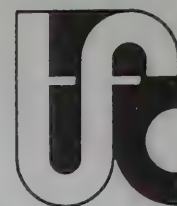
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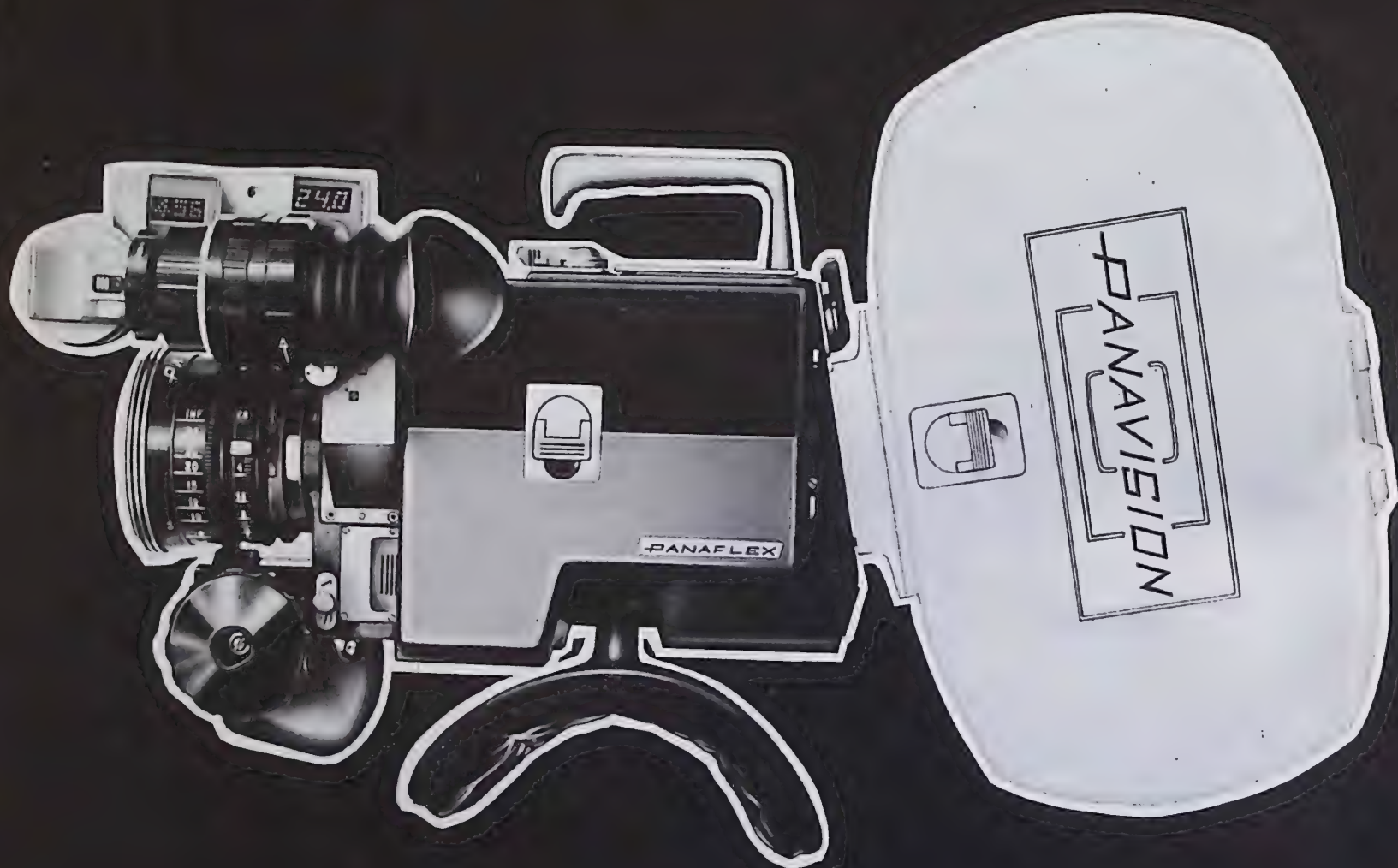
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The critical reaction to the official Olympic film has been exceedingly varied; sportsmen tend to tear it to pieces while film critics find it an interesting and oftentimes successful document. Tom Waugh and John Reeves give us their critical reactions below while Werner Nold, the film's editor, tells us about his work and his problems in coping with so complex a film.

an olympian effort



Getting part of the production crew together for the Olympic film

1) Demystifying the hype

by Thomas Waugh

It might have seemed that the *cinéma-direct* and the Olympics would be ill-matched bedfellows: a medium which can pick up the minutest nuance of everyday behavior would surely be at a loss in a world of mass regimentation, split-second timing, and security guards.

But the official Olympics film, currently reaching a wide audience in both its English and French versions, has succeeded splendidly in refuting this logic, and has provided us with a surprisingly fresh view of this grandiose and expensive spectacle which Jean Drapeau forced down our throats last summer.

Jean-Claude Labrecque, who has shot some of the best examples of the Quebec tradition of the *direct* as well as two finely tuned but underrated features, *Les smattes* and *Les vautours*, headed the huge production team, and clearly knew what he was looking for within this labyrinthine complex of events. He decided, fortunately, to give scant attention to the ceremonial and the official aspects of the Games, and to concentrate instead on "the human dimension," as he puts it, following at close range a selected number of athletes (plus a trainer or two) during their participation in the events.

This strategy has paid off handsomely. Instead of showing us a lot of lifeless scores and records that everybody saw on TV anyway, Labrecque has introduced us to real people, closely observed in their everyday styles and rhythms. His cameras have found real emotion and insight – and humor thankfully – in the endless stretches of time between photo-finishes where the sportscasters see only empty spaces to fill up.

In giving attention to the quiver of the lip of a sprinter who never makes it past the trials, or to the crack in the brittle façade of a television announcer, or to the spontaneous birds-on-a-wire choreography of a row of six listless Montreal policemen, Labrecque and his team restore a kind of balance to the warped universe of big-time sports, and begin to cut through all of the nonsense that the Olympics have come to mean. Of course, they couldn't go too far: after all COJO and the NFB were handling the million-dollar-plus budget. It's obvious that the real political meaning of the Games for Quebec and Canada is something they couldn't begin to approach.

One of the things they did get away with, I think, is challenging the mythology of "ennobling competition." For the most part, the athletes come across as uptight, pampered, egotistical, usually victimized, and often boring people (and sometimes downright obnoxious, as in a scene where Bruce Jenner berates an attendant who obviously doesn't understand what's going on). This makes the rare exceptions discovered by the cameras all the more exciting, Avilov, for example, the Soviet decathlon contender, who seems to be the only person in the whole complex at ease and enjoying himself, sprawling around the stadium with his legs all over the place listening to "Windmills of your Mind" on his pocket transistor.

The coaches and the trainers as a rule come across even worse than the athletes – some of the film's most successful comic moments are at the expense of those tense,



The ladies shone, but briefly

ridiculous men from Eastern Europe for whom it's all out of proportion.

In general, there's a feeling that these people, athletes and trainers alike, are trapped, expending themselves unquestioningly, masochistically, in the performance of absurd rituals demanded of them by a system and a value structure that is out of all control. The camera gives the impression, for example, while eavesdropping on an argument between the Soviet gymnast Nelli Kim and her coach (she explodes and says she's fed up with the Olympics as a whole) that the coach is under real pressure to find a way to humor and manipulate his teenaged charge in order to coax the best performance from her, in spite of herself, and that her integrity as a woman is largely irrelevant.

In short, the filmmakers have succeeded in showing us a very intricate political and emotional landscape indeed where the thrill of victory and all of that business occupy a very insignificant place.

Now for the bad news, as they say. **The Games of the XXI Olympiad** is the most insidiously sexist document to come out of the NFB in quite some time.

Some of those dynamite feminist filmmakers up there at the Board should have taken Labrecque and crew aside in the corridor one day and explained a thing or two (the small number of women on the 168 member production team, mostly pretty far down the hierarchy, apparently weren't enough). For instance, that a film about an event which institutionalizes nineteenth-century conceptions of sexual roles doesn't have to perpetuate those conceptions. That it might be possible to subvert or at least question some of those ideals which are inscribed into the very structure of the Games, ideals of manhood as strength, endurance and soldierly skills, ideals of womanhood as grace, nimbleness, and sensitivity.

Instead, Labrecque and his team – and the editors apparently share a large part of the blame – more or less play along, accepting things the way they are. They ape the media, for example, in their shocking underrepresentation

Thomas Waugh is a film professor at Concordia University in Montreal whose special interest is the documentary form.

2) The right to take liberties

an interview with Werner Nold by Jean-Pierre Tadros

*The making of the film **Games of the XXI Olympiad** was a great collective effort. This is true in the making of all films, but in this case, "collective" meant that 168 people were involved. One must not forget, either, that there were only 15 days in which to shoot, and absolutely no possibility of retakes. The monumental proportions of the task cannot be denied.*

An equally important task, one we tend to underestimate, is that of editing. Obviously, editing is an acquired skill and its seemingly mechanical aspect is apt to make us think that both the editor and the editing of a film are only an extension of the director's ability. This is often the case; however, a good editor and thus, good editing, can make all the difference. A wise director keeps this in mind when choosing the editor for his film.

In the case of the film on the Montreal Olympic Games, the editor's task could be resumed by these two basic jobs: to assemble a well-structured, 2-hour film out of 200 hours of shooting, and to do this within 6 months. The contract between the NFB and COJO in fact stipulated that a final copy of the film be ready by January of this year — exactly 6 months after the opening of the Games in Montreal.

These, then, were the two simple and precise obligations which put tremendous pressure on Werner Nold, the chief editor of the film. As he puts it, the editing represented a "titanic effort", and this, without exaggeration. Quite the contrary.

Werner Nold was well prepared because of his excellent formation and his long years of experience. He was born in Switzerland in 1933. After studying photography for three years, he came to Montreal and went to work for Film-Photography Service of the Quebec Government (which was to become the Office du film du Québec, and finally the Direction générale du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel). He was the cameraman for two consecutive series made for television and later worked for Nova Films in Quebec City, both as cameraman and editor. However, he quickly opted for editing.



Werner Nold, editor

*In 1960, Werner Nold joined the National Film Board where he eventually edited some 50 shorts and features. He worked with Gilles Carle (**La vie heureuse de Leopold Z**), Pierre Perrault and Michel Brault (**Pour la suite du monde**), Michel Brault (**Entre la mer et l'eau douce**), Marcel Carrière (**Saint-Denis dans le temps; O.K... Laliberté; Ti-Mine, Bernie pis la gang**), Francis Mankiewicz (**Le temps d'une chasse**) and Jacques Godbout (**IXE-13; La gammick**). He also edited 60 cycles by Jean-Clau-*

de Labrecque. In February, 1976, he was named chief editor of the official Olympic film. How did it happen? How did he meet the challenge? What exactly did it mean in terms of editing? The following are extracts taken from an interview with him just after the first official screening of the Olympic film in Montreal, April 21. Werner Nold answers some of our questions:

I have worked for the National Film Board since 1960 and I know pretty well how it operates. I know too when you put cameras into the hands of some 100 people how much footage I'm going to get. In fact, I estimated 400,000 feet and got exactly 331,608.

At first, I thought I'd be able to work with National Film Board editors. The difficulty there was that they were my peers, my equals, and there was no reason for them to consider me their boss. They were prepared to work with me as colleagues, but this would have meant hours of discussing and consulting with each other... If this happened, I couldn't guarantee that the film would get done on time or that I would have a rough-cut of 45 hours ready for November.

In this kind of undertaking, it's important that someone be able to make decisions, that someone assume responsibility. So I said to myself, I've been given responsibility for the film and I'm going to accept it. I sought out some former assistants of mine who were working in the private sector, and who had become editors. Working with them proved to be easy because they were more flexible than National Film Board editors and because they were tremendously efficient. They were François Labonté, Alain Sauvé, Claude Langlois and Gérald Vansier.

Once the games were over, how did you proceed with the editing work?

I invented a methodology; I distributed the work about evenly among the editors, taking into account their preference in sports and their relationships with the different filmmakers. For example, François Labonté knew Marcel Carrière well and I thought that they would work well together. By the same token, Alain Sauvé worked on the footage shot by George Dufaux. The others got more varied material.

I applied a Germanic military discipline. It was terrible. I feel bad just thinking of it. I had to though or we wouldn't have been able to go fast enough.



The men were racing ahead

of the women's events, an imbalance of four or five to one, by my reckoning.

But it is not only a question of this disproportion, bewildering and insulting as it is. From over 180,000 feet of rushes, the footage chosen inevitably tends to perpetuate the most anachronistic and vicious of sexual stereotypes. Is it an accident, for example, that the two major women's events portrayed in the film a women's handball game, and the gymnastic competition, both suggest by their selection of material and cutting the "bitchy", unsportsmanlike (for want of a better word) behavior that Hollywood has taught us to expect from women?

When the editors cut from Nadia Comaneci's sylph-like tour de force to outgoing champion Olga Korbut's expressions of intense concentration and nervousness (while the soundtrack tells us that her "reign" is over, a loaded word if ever there was one) and still continues the applause for Nadia on the soundtrack, Olga's look comes across like daggers. Then, mercilessly, we are given the event in which Olga makes a momentary slip. It's Bette Davis and Anne Baxter all over again, direct from the editing table. Hollywood itself couldn't have given us a better fiction of the desperate, cut-throat rivalry between an older woman and her young usurper. The men, of course, are all presented as jovial jocks, slapping victorious rivals on the back in the best British public school manner (or kissing and hugging in the East European manner) — there isn't a sorehead in the lot.

I suspect that the main reason that the Soviet — G.D.R. women's handball game got into the film (aside from the fact that the Soviet coach periodically turns bright red, stretches his neck in the most peculiar manner, and has to be restrained) is that the women are particularly nasty to each other on the court, and a penalty shot scene was available to round things out. We all know how cinematic nasty women are.

Without wanting to take away from the ineffable beauty of the women gymnasts' achievement, I would even go so far as to guess at a reason why so much attention is given to the women's gymnastic events in this film and in the media in general; straight male filmmakers and television sportscasters seem to be embarrassed and repelled by the hefty, broad-shouldered women of the athletics field (of whom we are barely permitted a telephoto glimpse in the film) and in contrast find petite, vivacious Nadia... well, sexy.

The worst is still to come. I'm willing to put up with a few gratuitous cutaways to appealing women spectators from time to time. I know sometimes it's hard to resist. However, I really wanted to throw up when the climactic coverage of the decathlon event, won by plastic blonde American Bruce Jenner, was intercut with footage of plastic blonde Mrs. Bruce Jenner in the stands, hoarsely cheering and flag-waving him on. Again pure Hollywood. Cheerleader and jock. Barbie and Ken dolls. Her breasts jostling with signification beneath her T-shirt as blatantly as his muscles beneath his. That prolonged intercutting of passive female spectator and active male athlete compresses an entire oppressive system of sexual roles into one apparently innocuous sequence.

Don't ever let anyone tell you how Riefenstahl puts across the ideals of Nazi civilization beneath the charming surface of her *Olympia* without mentioning that Labrecque et al. have come up with a film no less loaded with various deformed ideals of ours.

If the filmmakers are to be commended for demystifying so much of Olympics hype with their penetration of "the human dimension" of the Games, it is to be profoundly regretted that they didn't go a few steps further and tackle some of the sexual mythology also floating around inside that expensive, unfinished stadium. □

Once the material was distributed, we had to screen it, which I did, 7 hours a day, 5 days a week. At that rate, a person can go crazy. It was a gigantic task.

After screening the rushes, I had to start choosing the material and deciding what I would keep and what I would eliminate. It wasn't easy, but it had to be done. From the start I had had long discussions with Jean-Claude Labrecque whom I had known for 20 years. I had edited most of Marcel Carrière's films, and had known George Dufaux for 20 years too. With their consent, I started making a selection on a strictly intuitive basis. It was in keeping with the general mandate we had given ourselves.

Instinctively, I eliminated about 70% of the footage. That way, it was easier to go and get a shot that was needed, than to carry around 70% more material just in case...

Sometimes, the selection was easy. You sort of end up saying to yourself "This is a great shot so I'll take it, this one too", or, "I won't take this because I've got another shot which is just as good or better". Once in a while you get panicky, especially after 3 hours of screening when you still haven't chosen anything. At this point, you really have to force yourself not to quit, and to persevere.

After that, I spent 1½ to 2 hours every day looking at the selected, cleaned material with each of the editors. We would talk about the form a certain sequence would have. I found myself miming things I wanted to see. You had to invent a language for each of the editors; with Sauvé I tried to articulate the editing to go with Jenner and Avilov, and so on.

The next day I would go in to see what they had done, and to make adjustments if they were necessary. When I felt I had something, not necessarily definitive, but serious enough and without considering length, I would call Labrecque. We would discuss the sequence and would decide on another form if it was called for.

Three months later, we had put 4½ hours of film together. The work of my assistants was now completed, with the exception of that of François Labonté, who stayed on with me. At that point, I started to bring the film down to 2 hours. That was it. It was a very difficult time. I have already said that there is a 6-month gap in my life. It's true. There are 6 months that simply



Director Jean-Claude Labrecque

don't exist anymore. I don't know where they went.

One realizes that editing that sort of material is far from easy, especially when you are limited by the same movements being repeated over and over again – running, jumping, swimming, throwing. It would be interesting to know how you got around the demands made upon you because the film was sponsored.

You simply have to fight. After a screening, if the COJO told me that such and such a sport was missing, I'd say to myself, "I just have to add it". At the same time, I was forced to think of what I would take out. The film couldn't be longer than two hours. So I'd start to defend my own choices.

To be sure, there were no judo sequences in the film. But if I had to add one, I would have to cut an equivalent sequence out, and it isn't always possible to do that without destroying the balance that you want to achieve. For example, if much more had been taken out of the Hungarian pentathlon sequence, it wouldn't have had any reason for being there at all. You just have to stay within certain limits. This is what was hard – not destroying everything just because of one addition.

So I fought to keep the Hungarian sequences and not to add another sport. That was finally accepted, but that doesn't mean I didn't make compromises. I had to. An experienced eye can see that the shots of little boats and little canoes here and there were added to please COJO. But this doesn't spoil the whole, and

even adds a few moments of leisure to the film.

When you think about it, I worked under rather unusual circumstances.

Let's go back to this instinctive, or intuitive selection you made after the first screenings. Besides quality, what guided your choice.

It was simple. In my opinion, what distinguishes this film from other Olympic films is that it was made by the National Film Board. It consisted of taking a 16mm camera, plugging it into a Nagra, and getting as close to people as possible with it. Whenever I found something the least bit human, I pounced on it. That's why a knock-out punch was less important than the two boxers' attitude and sportsmanship towards each other at the end of the match.

That's the way it was. Basically, sports don't interest me that much; what interests me is a human being. And if the film means so much to me today, it isn't because of the sports, but because of those people who participated in them. I wanted to get the human side of these athletes – the real person.

Also, concerning the editing, I think it's important to mention that in recent years I have worked on more fiction films than documentaries. This helped a lot; it helped me give the film more continuity. I feel that I succeeded in making the track in the stadium really look oval, something I've never seen in other Olympic films. And if I did succeed, it's because of the fiction film, not the documentary.

The fact too, that there were so many cameras at the stadium helped me to treat the film as "fiction", something you can't normally do. In a documentary, you work with one camera, and are forced to use ellipses. You take the good moments when they come. With this film, I always had another angle from another camera. I could re-situate myself that way, and I do think that in the finished film you never feel lost when looking at a scene.

There are no cut-aways in the film. When you see spectators sitting in the stands, they are somehow linked to what is going on below. In this way the public is integrated with the action. There is a continuity I'm quite proud of.

In getting so close to the individual, one finishes by losing sight of the whole context. Is it fair to say that this is a weakness in the film?

3) Shallower, emptier, weaker

by John Reeves

The National Film Board's film of the Montreal Olympic Games is a disaster. A disaster with redeeming moments. But far too few of them.

Let me begin by admitting that there never has been and never will be a good *comprehensive* film of an Olympic Games. And that is no fault of the filmmakers'; the Games are so large that no one film could do them justice. Even Leni Riefenstahl's recourse to two films, instead of one, scratched the surface. After all, almost every event (there are very few turkeys) comes as close to perfection as the best competition in the world can push it. A comprehensive film would have to cover everything, including significant semi-finals and heats, in every discipline; the world's best divers have just as much right to coverage as the world's best gymnasts, in terms of the quality of their achievement.

If the Games ever were to be filmed comprehensively, the footage would have to be divided into several films; in fact, each sport would need a separate film, made by specialists and aimed at the fans of that sport. The market for such films would be vast, and it is surprising that no one has tapped it. It is not, perhaps, surprising that the International Olympic Committee has never organized anything along these lines, for it is not composed of men responsive to such notions as the importance of history. But it is surprising that the International Federations which govern the Olympic sports have not seized the opportunity to record the proceedings for posterity and at the same time turn a tidy profit.

However, it's never been done. And because it hasn't, a serious dilemma faces the filmmaker who is asked to make an Olympic film of average length. He has to decide whether to address specialists, or generalists, or the lay public. Each course has its dangers. To devote two hours to one sport, on a specialist level, will alienate all who are not devotees of that sport. To devote eight quarter-hours to eight sports, on a semi-specialist level, assumes that sports fans tend to be catholic in their interests, and this is seldom true. To ignore special knowledge or special interest, for the lay public, is likely to irritate many potential ticket-buyers by diluting the quality of the reportage.

Nevertheless, the last course, properly pursued, is probably the wise one. Filming the Games as a sports film can only work well if done at enormous length for several expert audiences. To satisfy one general audience, it's necessary to film the Games as a human interest story. If this is done well, the result will satisfy not only lay viewers, but specialised viewers too. The latter will gladly forego the specialised coverage, which they have access to in print anyway, if the film offers real insights into the athletic version of the human condition. Sports, at the top level, are not merely a matter of physical strength and skill; they make huge demands on the athlete's mental, emotional, and spiritual resources; they involve the whole person. In other words, they cannot be understood unless they are seen as a vocation, like higher mathematics, or music, or religion, or even filmmaking.

John Reeves: by avocation a long-distance runner and former holder of all Canadian veterans' records from the half-mile to the ten-mile; by profession a broadcaster and writer, winner of the Italia Prize for Radio Drama in 1959. Publications: three plays in print, one LP of verse.



The human dimension, in pain and victory



And that is why the NFB film of the Montreal Olympics is a disaster. Having elected to film the Games as a human interest story, the NFB directors failed completely to get inside the skin of almost every athlete they shot. Indeed, they can hardly be said to have tried to do so. Let me document this by appraising their coverage of some of these people.

Lasse Viren. This Finnish runner epitomises the spirit of the Olympics. At Munich he won the 5,000 metres and the 10,000 metres. At Montreal he became the first man in history to repeat this feat and followed it up with a superb run in the marathon. Between the Olympiads he fell into relative obscurity, partly through injury and partly through a wish to save himself for the next Games. Shortly before Montreal he began to re-emerge as a force to be reckoned

If what you say is true, it doesn't really bother me very much. Everybody had a chance to see the actual events on television. In fact, we purposely wanted to show something other than what had been shown on television.

That was our point of view, but it was unavoidable. Everybody accepted it. We were even predisposed through our formation. And that way, we avoided showing again what everyone had already seen.

During the film, there are many little sequences which are only there because they are unusual... bizarre. Some might say that the editing was facile, that you were just using the bizarre events for their own sake.

Oh! Let's just say we used them to relax the viewer. The Hungarian sequence, for instance is good, but heavy. So we alleviated the feeling by using somewhat provocative and unexpected situations. Naturally, one has to be careful when using this technique. But these little moments do constitute a part of life.

I don't think it can be called voyeurism — merely observation. That's what makes it interesting.

Was it very difficult to give the film a certain rhythm?

Yes, and I suppose it's a problem with all films. Suppose you have someone crossing the screen in six steps. Even if we cut the shot in half, you have someone taking 3 steps, but still at the same speed, and therefore just as slowly. Others often tell you that you should cut more, and tighten up the editing, that way obtaining a faster rhythm. But it doesn't work that way. All you do that way is shorten the length of the film. The rhythm is in the images; it never varies.

You can't save a film through editing. There isn't an editor in the world who has ever saved a film. Some have ruined films, but that isn't quite the same thing. An editor doesn't save a film; he either edits it well, or not so well, or else he just plain spoils it.

Did you adapt André Gagnon's music to the marathon sequence or did the music itself just fit in well there?

At the very beginning, I had gotten all the marathon material together into a half hour sequence. I showed it to Gagnon to give him an idea of what it was about, and he



Getting a shot at the cyclers

then composed his music. I then edited the sequence from the music, and obtained a very precise rhythm because of it. It is easier to give musical rhythm to images, than to force a musician to invent a rhythm which is perfectly adapted to the edited film.

Now, according to the original script, the marathon sequence was to reappear at different intervals throughout the film as a leitmotiv. I tried to do it that way but it didn't work. Whenever the marathon scene appeared, the film just seemed to block. We realised that we couldn't use the marathon sequences in this way, and so placed them at the beginning and the end of the film instead.

Actually, we tried 6 different structures for the film. In one, there was even a comparative study of the pentathlon and decathlon events. On top of that, there was the marathon which kept popping up periodically. That didn't work cut either, especially since the contrast between Jenner and the Hungarians was so great that we couldn't get any cohesiveness.

With so many records beat in swimming, it is surprising to see that this event occupies so little space in the film.

I can explain that quite easily. And now I'll give you a really personal opinion — that it is terrible to make films with only 2 or 3 heads sticking out of the water. I find that awful. We did have a lot of material on the swimming events, but it would have been too complicated to use.

In fact, it was difficult during the shoot as well as during the editing. All you had were these heads on the water. I found it far more interesting at the end of the competition when they embraced and congratulated each other.

And there was something else. The noise inside the Olympic swim-

ming pool was deafening. The synchronised sound was inaudible and that didn't help any.

Since we are on the subject of what is missing in the film, why is it that women seem to occupy so little time. Was this done consciously?

Firstly, I'm not sure it's true. The part with the gymnasts Nelli Kim, Nadia Comaneci and Olga Korbut constitutes a fairly big chunk of the film. There were also the swimming and handball sequences... However, it's true that we had to eliminate some of the women's sequences, and I think I can explain why.

For example, we had a whole sequence of the women's high-jump. That would have been the third time we used the high-jump in the film what with the decathlon event and Gregg Joy. We preferred to keep the one with Gregg Joy, first because he won, and second, because we also had Ferragne in it. That sequence also showed the audience at the stadium spontaneously and unanimously rising to their feet with joy (no pun intended).

We also had a women's 400 metre relay. But to me, the men's 400 metre relay was a historical moment in filmmaking, and again we had to make a choice. I don't believe it was a prejudice, but simply a case of putting filmmaking before any other consideration. Cinema had priority. — that was the only thing I had in mind.

Through the editing, you sometimes created situations that didn't really exist. For instance, there was the relationship between Jenner and Avilov at the stadium, and the surprising way it was portrayed. What was the truth behind that?

I think we had the right to take certain liberties. ORTO prepared and showed on television what really happened and I don't think it could have been done better. Since a factual account exists, I felt free to somewhat alter the reality.

It's true that when you show Avilov relaxed and listening to his transistor radio, and then suddenly cut to Jenner who is not looking particularly happy, something is obviously being implied. That's what cinema is all about.

One musn't forget that editing is also creating, fabricating emotions. I think I succeeded in doing that in the film on the Montreal Olympic Games. □

with. And behind this re-emergence lay months of dedication and discipline which only a very big man would be able to endure – in this case, a complex and private man, with an engaging sense of humour and a sensible refusal to take himself too seriously. After Munich his fellow-townsmen wanted to erect a statue to him and he was appalled at the idea, so they pooled their skills (their skills, not their money – here and there in the world there is still some direct contact with reality) and built him a house, at the edge of the forest where he loves to train. This is the man, an iron and gentle soul, who came to Montreal and massacred the 10,000 metre field in the fastest time of the year. He then faced as fine a field of 5,000 metre men as has ever been assembled, and controlled the first half of the race from the front, like a virtuoso conductor taking charge of a major orchestra, and took everything they could throw at him in the final lap, one of the supreme final laps ever run, and calmly finished first while they fell about the track in his wake. The *next day*, in the first marathon of his life he finished fifth in a time which has not yet been beaten this year. And what does the NFB give us of Lasse Viren? Nothing of the 10,000 metres, one shot of his marathon finish, in which he goes unidentified and nothing is said of his achievement, and the last two laps of his 5,000 metres. Well and good. Those two laps were the crown of his achievement and could serve to sum him up; you can say a lot in two minutes, visually and on the sound-track. Visually, the NFB spent half its time on shots of a sports commentator getting excited *about* the race, instead of showing us the race. It even omitted the available footage of that extraordinary moment, coming off the last turn, when all the runners still in contention were stripped down to their last shred of will. This showed most eloquently in their faces and their bodies, and all of them caved in except the one great man, who had foxed them into a slowed-up tempo halfway through and now was running them into the ground. On the sound-track, the NFB had nothing to say except that the winning time was slow! It is excusable, in a non-specialist film, that there should be no thorough analysis of Viren's tactics. It is inexcusable that there should be no glimpse of his heart and mind; the more so since the avowed aim of the director was "to make the film in such a way that at the end you will have met some people and will have grown to like them".

At the end you will have spent a substantial length of time with the decathlon, the modern pentathlon, the women's gymnastics, the heavyweight weight-lifting, the bicycle team-pursuit, and the men's 100 metre dash; you will have spent a little, uninformative time with the marathon. You will have seen cut-away shots of sailing, rowing, canoeing, and boxing. And you will have had token minutes, illuminating neither character nor achievement, with the men's 400 metre track relay, the men's volleyball, the men's long-distance bicycle race, the men's high jump, the men's 110 metre hurdles, the men's 1500 metre run, the men's backstroke, the men's tower dive, the men's sabre, the men's 400 metre run, the women's freestyle, the women's 200 metre dash, and the women's team-handball. This last sequence, in a film slightly inattentive to female athletes, seemed devoted to the proposition that women have just about made the grade as mindless and brutal jocks.

Ultimately, the film must stand or fall on its six major sequences. One of these is extremely successful, four are mediocre, and one is a grievous failure.

The successful one is a portrait of Vasily Alexeev, the Soviet weightlifter. Virtually nothing is said on the sound-track, by him or about him, but a tremendous amount is conveyed nevertheless. Here, one feels, is a man willing to say of his life, "I am what I do", and what he does comes

across as an awesome contest between the law of gravity and one man's willingness to challenge it with the sum of himself. The director and the editor have achieved this portrait by the simplest means, by allowing the material to speak for itself, and by not hurrying it; the long passages in which Alexeev psychs himself up to attack the bar are extraordinarily moving – close-up at its best.

Close-up at its worst was demonstrated in the modern pentathlon coverage. Here, in the fencing event, the director saw fit to rely on head-and-shoulders shots of the contestants: no shots of the weapons. The coverage, as a whole, followed the Hungarian team through the five events, indicating that the result fell disappointingly short of the team's expectations, and purported to explore the members' experiences and feelings in some depth. Depth? This is what we see. We see failure; a rider falls off a horse, and the coach tears his hair. We see competence in swimming and shooting and fencing. We see anxiety, and emotional and physical stress. And we see inexperience; a runner stops five yards short of the finish line. All of which adds up to a collection of shallow snippets. We have not "met some people and... grown to like them". But we have met a superficial journalist.

The same shallowness mars the sequences devoted to the bicycling, the sprinting, and the gymnastics. Of these three sequences, that of the gymnastics is the most nearly acceptable, but this is almost entirely because of the charming qualities of the activity itself. The two girl-stars, Nelli Kim and Nadia Comaneci, remain throughout enigmas as people, and the one moment of true human contact is with Olga Korbut in defeat, but it's arguable that even this depends for its effectiveness on our memories of her in Munich, outside this film. There is a similar, and successful, moment of wistful poignancy in the sprint sequence when the injured Cuban runner Sylvio Leonard has to watch his event from the sidelines. This shot would have had compelling validity if it had climaxed a sequence in which we had gotten to know Leonard well and to care about him. Since we weren't enabled to do that, the shot amounts to no more

The exhilaration of winning



than exploitation, the willingness to use a man's injury and disappointment for the sake of pathos. A similar charge has to be laid against the bicycling sequence. Apart from its technical inefficiency (the excitement of a team-pursuit race is lost if the camera doesn't take a long enough shot to show you both teams simultaneously), the sequence made no attempt to portray the cyclists as people, to explore their individual make-up and their superb functioning as a team; when one of them, in victory, broke down and cried, the effect on the viewer is of a tasteless invasion of privacy.

Blunders of that sort, usually, are caused by two things: insensitivity to people, and lack of respect for the material. Both of these faults are extensively present in the sequence devoted to the decathlon, which ought to have been, and could have been, a marvellous film achievement. The decathlon is a gruelling ten-event competition, held on two successive days, in which men strive to excel in widely differing track-and-field disciplines. They jump, they throw, they pole-vault, they hurdle, and they run. The winner is rightly called "the world's best all-round athlete". The winner at Montreal was Bruce Jenner of the United States. The runner-up was Nikolay Avilov of the Soviet Union. It was obvious in advance that one of these two, barring injury, would win, more probably Jenner. The NFB realised this, and assigned a crew to follow Jenner around full time during and between events. This was time which could have been better spent beforehand. If the NFB had followed Jenner around in California during his final preparatory year, it might have been possible to grasp what goes into the making of a champion decathlete, not on the technical level, for that would be a specialist's film, but on the human level. And this was a human story worth a whole film.

Athletic excellence, of this magnitude and diversity, can only be attained by living the disciplines 24 hours a day 365 days a year. For Jenner, living in a society which cares nothing for excellence unless it's packaged as showbiz, this meant months, extending into years, of total dependency on his wife. She earned the necessities of life while he trained and trained and trained and trained and trained and trained and trained and trained and trained at his ten necessities of greatness. Small wonder she was overwrought at Montreal, to the point of near hysteria. It was her gold medal almost as much as his; without her love and understanding and support he couldn't have won. But we were denied any knowledge of these things by the NFB. To anyone not knowing them, the shots of her breaking down must seem scarcely distinguishable from the partisan emotionalism of the more obnoxious kind of hockey parent. And that is a deep injustice to a loving wife. Moreover, to anyone not knowing them, there must be a feeling of cynicism and almost repellent flippancy when Jenner finishes up turning his back on the decathlon for ever, with apparent unconcern. That is a deep injustice to a loving husband, who had vowed to devote his time from then on to earning all the household money and enabling his lady to pursue an avocation of her own. It takes a director insensitive to drama to omit, as Labrecque did, the astounding episode in the pole-vault when Jenner "passed" heights dangerously near to his personal best. It takes a director insensitive to sport to omit, as Labrecque did, any examination of how a man can drive himself to achieving a lifetime best on the two days when it counts. But most of all it takes a director insensitive to people to omit, as Labrecque did, the story of the Jenner marriage from the story of the Jenner medal. That is a failure of the heart, and not easily forgiven.

The motto of the Olympics is "Citius, altius, fortius": "Faster, higher, stronger". The verdict on this film, compared with what it might have been and compared with even the worst of the previous Olympic films, has to be "Shallower, emptier, weaker". □



The Wesscam in action

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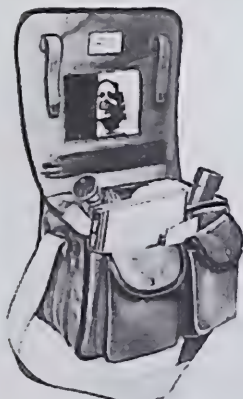
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bill fruet

2 or 3 things...

by
Piers Handling

Bill Fruet is not only a Canadian survivor, he prospers. Many were aghast when he turned from 'art' to 'horror' as he entered the commercial arena with *Death Weekend*. Piers Handling examines that film and Fruet's previous ones — those he directed and those he scripted — to discover the ideas common in all his works.

Jeannie, repressed and distant, in *Wedding in White*



"These women and the way they felt, and that whole drinking mentality, made such an impression on me. And I have no use for this kind of existence, I detested it all, even back then."

—Bill Fruet interviewed by George Csaba Koller on **Wedding in White**. Cinema Canada no 3 p. 45.

Bill Fruet has been associated with success. His total output has been numerically small — three features as scriptwriter, two as director — yet of these five no less than **three** were honored as best feature film at the Canadian Film Awards — no mean achievement. His script for **Goin' Down the Road** broke much new territory and, combined with Shebib's fine direction, elevated the film to what must surely rank as a milestone in the development of an indigenous English Canadian feature film industry. His first effort as a director, for which he also wrote the script, achieved a critical success for Fruet that again suggested another step forward for our fledgling industry. A warm Cannes reception combined with a prestigious New York opening convinced many foreign critics that **Wedding in White** was evidence of a new-found maturity in our cinema. Then, everything Fruet touched seemed to turn to gold. His next script grew into **Slipstream** which won another best film award, and finally his latest, **Death Weekend** is a run-away commercial hit — about \$800,000 in advance sales at Cannes alone in 1976.

Apart from all these outward signs of success, Fruet is interesting in other ways. Indeed, it is perhaps not going too far to say that he will be a key figure in an understanding of our present-day cinema. Alone of all our contemporary English-language filmmakers, Fruet is an *auteur* — an author in the true sense of the word, responsible for both writing and directing his work. While the three scripts which he did not direct (**Goin' Down the Road**, **Rip-Off** and **Slipstream**) were refracted through another sensibility, it is possible to discern attitudes and ideas which were confirmed in **Wedding in White** and **Death Weekend**. This article has largely been motivated by seeing these two latter films at almost the same time, both eliciting similar responses which I'll confess at the outset, a certain degree of anger and hostility. Using this as a point of departure I want to touch on certain facets of Fruet's work that I find revealing.

* * *



Bill Fruet filming **Wedding**

Piers Handling is head of the Canadian Film Institute's publications section and is the author of *Canadian Feature Films 1964-1969*.

All of Fruet's work shares common characteristics, more exaggerated in certain instances, less visible in others. It is unified by a similar attitude to the people of his films, how they interrelate and what kinds of situations Fruet takes them through. The scripted work reveals characters and relationships not radically different from the two directed pieces. Robert Fothergill in his excellent article on the Canadian male, **Being Canadian Means Always Having to Say You're Sorry**, touches upon many feelings and impressions discernible in Fruet's work. Paul Bradley and Doug McGrath play similar roles in **Goin' Down the Road** and **Wedding in White** — a couple of beery and convivial buddies out for a good time, more often than not at the expense of others. But in the latter film they exist too dangerously as one-dimensional figures, a parody of the soldier-on-leave who just wants a woman and a drink. The four teenage boys in **Rip-Off** ceaselessly cook-up elaborate schemes designed to impress a group of young girls, but each plan ends in failure and rejection until finally they stumble across the magic formula. Their continual attempts at a pick-up strike a responsive note when one thinks of Harry in **Death Weekend** who similarly has little else on his mind. But whereas **Rip-Off** is at least an honest effort to come to grips with a milieu and an attitude common to that time, little is done to understand Harry.

However it is Fruet's depiction of women in these films that is highly revealing. In **Goin' Down the Road**, **Rip-Off** and **Slipstream** they are viewed as disruptive forces that come between men and deflect them from their chosen path in life. The two Shebib films share a common posture towards their women, either portraying them as silly, flighty broads with curlers in their hair, interested in little more than marriage, or as remote and distant fantasies, fundamentally inaccessible, expressions of a lifestyle that is beyond the reach of the men that are attracted to them. Betts and Celina, the women that Joey and Pete can get, are contrasted to the sexy secretary in the bottle plant and the girl in the record store, in **Goin' Down the Road**. In **Rip-Off**, Susan is a classic portrait of the Lolita like bitch-goddess, hard, calculating, and cold, but of course beautiful. When our protagonist finally beds her, after dreaming up elaborate schemes to impress, her attention span lasts no longer than the physical act. What becomes objectionable in **Rip-Off** apart from the characterization of Susan is the fact that it remains so unbalanced throughout the film. Girls become little more than accessories — to have and to hold, but not to cherish. Getting one means putting on an act of some sort, or doing something different.

Slipstream at least sees some evolution, having a heterosexual relationship at the centre of its structure (regardless of how unsatisfactory it may be in its portrayal). But Kathy is always seen as an interloper, as somebody who has invaded Mike Mallard's privacy. She initially inserts herself into his life as one of a truck-load of hippies, and tries to domesticate him. Then she becomes associated with another force who is also seen as restricting Mallard's freedom; his radio producer expects him to play certain music to keep the record companies happy. That Mallard is forced to change, indeed perhaps sees the need himself, is communicated to us almost entirely in terms of loss. But there is much of interest in this film in light of what preceded it — a growing exploration of the demands that a full and committed relationship places upon people, and a realization that one's parameters of freedom are more tenuous than imagined. That Kathy is viewed as a threat is natural, given Fruet's concerns, but at least she is human.

* * *

Consider two moments in Fruet's films — one that achieves its force verbally, the other visually. Both evidence

a certain tone that is imparted to each film, a tone that I want to explore. It is about the mid-way point of **Wedding in White**. Jeannie is struggling with the distinct possibility that Billy's brutal rape has left her pregnant. Her mother and father, in company with their friends Sarah and Sandy, have just returned home after Jim's commemorative dinner. The two men disappear into the basement to merrily drink on, leaving their womenfolk upstairs to share a pot of tea. Sarah and Mary decry the fact that their men have to push their drinking to such senseless limits. "Now my husband was a real gentleman" the widowed Sarah declares, before leaving to catch the last bus. Alone in the dining room, it's late and subdued. A type of tiredness has settled on the scene and Jeannie asks her mother why Sarah walks with a limp. Her 'gentleman' of a husband badly beat her up one night, her mother tells her, but "poor Sarah, she doesn't remember a thing."

The scene in **Death Weekend** works in a different way. Our apparently suave dentist has asked a young, attractive model out to his country house for the weekend. Only one in a long line of such dates, Diane has been lured out to his estate under the assumption that there is going to be a weekend party. Harry of course has only one thing on his mind - Diane and bed. After introducing her to his impressive dwelling, Diane is shown to her bedroom where, alone, she begins to unpack her clothes. Suddenly we become aware that Harry is watching her through a one-way mirror, specially constructed for such a purpose. Undressing, Diane moves into the bathroom to shower, oblivious that Harry is only inches away from her and can see her every movement. Gloating over his imagined forthcoming conquest, and savouring her nakedness, Harry produces a camera and proceeds to photograph her. After a few exposures he noiselessly slips out of his secret compartment.

Extracted in isolation these scenes are harmless. In the context of each film they are devastating. If the total effect of almost all of **Wedding in White** is to strip away our illusions of life, a movement closely matched with what Jeannie herself is undergoing, Fruet allows us no relief from his relentless and unforgiving stare. Although the film is full of very human moments, skilfully written and delicately presented, paradoxically it is also curiously devoid of humanity. If every character in the film is revealed as selfish, cruel or hypocritical (and this is where the scene with Sarah is so important) then what do we have to hold this up against? Nothing in fact. There is no one we can hold onto as an audience, no one who is different, no one who rebels. As an audience we are forced towards Jeannie. Yet there is a curious void at the centre of this film and eventually one comes to the conclusion that it resides in Jeannie's characterization. We never really come close to her. She is relatively without energy, almost apathetic in accepting her fate. In fact, she shows real excitement only when her father brings home her wedding dress. This lack of energy, combined with the intensity of what we are being shown, creates a feeling of incredible repression that is felt as belonging to events within the film, but which is communicated to the audience. It is an energy that we want to discharge - we want a release! Beyond a point, it is useless to subject an audience to any more battering, and within the dramatic framework of his film, Fruet has lost something at the same time. Without a moment of optimism, a single breath of fresh air, every new element of the grotesque that he introduces into the drama loses its impact. But this ceaseless layering of levels of despair, repression and hypocrisy seems to point towards an attitude that Fruet must feel towards his characters. If the final sentiment imparted by the film is of the characters as a series of rigorously manipulated puppets, there is also a sense of condescension that verges on hatred.

Harry lewdly eying Diane showering as he photographs her reinforces responses that I felt while watching **Wedding in White**. The shower scene does not really surprise one, nor is it out of character. We feel that we have a good grip on Harry as a person. He's just interested in 'getting it off' with Diane. She'll be a nice lay as he's already said to the two country bumpkins who act as informal guards to his country mansion. So we have already become used to Harry treating people as objects, as casual conquests. His home has been decorated with only one thing in mind - to impress. Diane is just another piece of the furniture, similar to the grand piano that he has but cannot play. But his private shower session is important in defining Harry in relation to the loutish band of misfits who reek terror on his weekend. His kinky sexual needs differ little from Lep's, who is unable to rape Diane unless she fights back; or indeed Runt, who, given Diane, orders her to put on all kinds of make-up, before gently cutting her on the neck with his straight razor, as a type of foreplay to sex. The sexual kinkiness closely identifies Harry with the four thugs, and when he is killed we feel no remorse. Diane's horror is certainly not our own. By disposing of Harry so early, Fruet loses any chance he has to perhaps change the character in interesting ways (as Peckinpah did with the Dustin Hoffman figure in **Straw Dogs**).

A razor-cut as foreplay in **Death Weekend**



If the scene with Sarah is representative of the excess of **Wedding in White**, that with Harry in **Death Weekend** is also damning and limiting. If Harry is in reality no different than Lep and his gang then no one is to be trusted *at all* in this film (which is similar to the situation in **Wedding in White**). Everyone is involved in a hideous mire of connected guilt, where degrees of morality become meaningless. Fruet's highly negative attitude towards people is more exaggerated in **Death Weekend** than in his other works. The demands of the action genre no doubt explain away parts of this – sketchy characterizations prone to caricature combined with a less subtle coloring of events and psychological development. But is **Death Weekend** really a departure for Fruet? Is it that different from his other work? One might hastily rush towards an affirmative answer. While **Wedding in White** strikes one immediately as serious artwork, **Death Weekend** is obviously aimed towards a commercial market and is markedly different from the intimate elegance of its predecessor. However it is my contention that the two films do share a great deal in common.

The scripted projects all exude a certain warmth. We are moved as an audience by the predicament of the characters, express sympathy for their shortcomings and failed dreams. Yet **Wedding in White** and **Death Weekend** have strong currents of coldness in them, are devoid of compassion or present highly distorted images of life. As if conscious of his limitations in dealing with women, both Fruet's features deal with the female in a far more rigorous manner. But elements of machismo dominate. If we have already seen the roots of Dolly in the portrayal of Susan in **Rip-Off**, here she plays a more important role. Women in **Wedding in White** are either docile like Jeannie, her mother and Sarah, and move in fear of their men, who are treated as 'others' (in the same way that the men are never really comfortable with their women); or are prick-teasers like Dolly, brash, loud, physically assertive and verbally cruel but definitely "no hands below the belt." It is important that it is Dolly's ceaseless taunting of Billy which tragically ends in his releasing his frustrations by raping Jeannie. Men are brutes, but look who eggs them on to it. Everyone, except Jeannie, the victim, is morally stripped in front of us, revealing their cruelty and inhumanity at some point in the film. Those who seem more aware, or more kindly than the others all have their moments of ugliness. Jeannie's mother is allowed a wordless moment of judgment at the wedding reception when she realizes that she has been privy to a gross and indecent travesty of justice. The groom, a kindly sort who has no real faults apart from his perpetual state of intoxication, is ultimately enmeshed in this web of complicity. In the film's final sequence, he drunkenly but gently consoles his distraught, sobbing bride who is huddling in a corner of the room. "Ah, what's the matter. There's no need to be afraid of Sandy." Moving towards the stairs which he realises he can't negotiate by himself, he eventually persuades Jeannie to give him a helping hand. This moment of guarded tenderness is destroyed, however, when Sandy, now successfully at the top of the stairs, coarsely grabs his child-bride before gleefully shoving her into the bedroom. The camera remains discreetly mounted at the bottom of the stairs; one only hears the squeaking of the bedsprings.

Death Weekend shares frighteningly similar characteristics with its predecessor. In crudest terms, we find in both films rape, a group of drunken men who terrorize women, and women as victims of men's mental frustrations and sexual needs. Diane fights back, as Jeannie never did. Paradoxically it is *she* who is really responsible for the holocaust of violence precisely by doing this. Her aggressive 'masculine' driving is skillful enough to push Lep and his gang off the road at the beginning of the film. It is her abili-



The beery two-some, home from the army, in **Wedding in White**

ty to think like a man that not only gets her into the whole mess in the first place, but is also responsible for getting her out of it. In some grotesque exchange of roles, Harry becomes passive, protecting his furniture and home, assuming a 'female' role, while Diane becomes more and more aggressive. Even Lep unconsciously recognizes this and the real struggle in the film is between him and her. When Diane stops struggling during the rape, he cannot go on. As soon as she assumes the passive 'female' role, it is no longer arousing for him. Diane's vengeance is totally ruthless, much as we assume Lep's would be. This confusion of roles adds an interesting dimension to the film, particularly in light of Fruet's presentation of the sexes in his other films. One is almost tempted to add that the central importance given to Diane as a woman is almost grafted on the film in some respects, for in important ways she is not even a female in Fruet's eyes.

Beyond the core of these films, Fruet has also adopted a dangerously condescending attitude towards his minor characters, in most cases men. I'm thinking of the two soldiers who try and pick up Dolly and Jeannie, following them into a café to entertain them with impersonations of famous personalities. Or the two yokels with whom Harry leaves his car, a couple of friends who, weekend after weekend, share the visual delights of the women that Harry brings with him. Perpetually drunk, their comic foray up the river to check on Harry and Diane ends in their callous deaths at the hands of two of Lep's gang, driving Harry's super power-boat. The films are full of such moments, when more often than not a drunken stupor has settled across some character.

It has not been my intention to damn Fruet or his films, only to explore my ambivalence towards them, an ambivalence caused by an ugly streak in the films. That Fruet has the right to an artistic vision of unmitigated bleakness, full of the darkness of human nature is one thing; but that this is the only facet of life found in his films is limited and unrealistic. Sadly, one must tentatively suggest that the warmth and understanding found in the scripted works is perhaps not entirely Fruet's.

The final shot in **Death Weekend**, Diane stepping out of the jeep after having won her duel with Lep only confirms much of what I feel about Fruet and this film in particular. The use of slow-motion encourages us to reflect on what this carnage has all meant, and how it had effected Diane. But it is used gratuitously, having little more than a dream-like quality to it. What is this shot meant to communicate – relief and exhilaration, or horror, shock and despair? I certainly don't know and I don't think Fruet does either. □

grierson film seminar

the documentary idea

Every year filmmakers, film librarians and documentary enthusiasts gather at the Grierson Seminar. Alice Smith gives us a rundown of this year's gathering and shares some thoughts about the documentary form.

by Alice Smith



Dr. M.M. Coady, Director of St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department, greeting students who have come to attend "People's Schools": from Moses Coady

Is the word "documentary" a grab-bag term, at best? Its early definition, "the creative treatment of actuality" doesn't help much, and it belonged to Grierson. In any case, if the word or the genre it is supposed to describe owes anything other than its name to John Grierson, this year's Grierson Film Seminar failed to show it. The organizers managed, somehow, to celebrate Grierson and the documentary film without ever once discussing what either of them was all about.

It is essential to realize that the documentary idea was not basically a film idea at all, and the film treatment it inspired, only an incidental aspect of it. John Grierson said as much and in so many words. Grierson was a man devoted to the expression of an ideal democracy; his dream for documentary film was that it create a great, international interflow of "living documents" freely-traded amongst a people bound less by geographic lines than by a need to understand what he chose to call "the stubborn raw material of our modern citizenship." Put less esoterically (and a good deal later) by a former president of CBS News; "what you don't know can kill you. Our job is to see that you know." The idea is the same: film as knowledge, knowledge as the cement of society.

difficult, but we have, as ever, "the duty of exploring them and of waking the heart and will in regard to them."

Of the more than thirty films screened at the Seminar, two are distinctly Griersonian, ideologically; Clarke Mackey's **A Right To Live** and the National Film Board's **Moses Coady**, produced by Rex Tasker and written and directed by Kent Martin. Both films stress a participatory democracy wherein a united co-operative movement attempts to win for itself some measure of bargaining power as protection against bureaucratic abuse of human rights. Propaganda films both, and properly so; their aim is social action and, to a considerable degree, each has achieved success. **Moses Coady** has had CBC screening, and distribution through the Department of External Affairs to embassies around the world. **A Right To Live**, commissioned by the Union of Injured Workers, had had limited screening through the theatre system but frequent viewing before interested groups inside and outside the union movement. In the case of **A Right To Live**, the filmmaker approached the union with his proposal for the film and the union, in its turn, played an integral part in its assembly. So close-knit was the relationship that union members involved in the making of the film frequently accompany its screening to participate when discussion follows. Both **Moses Coady** and **A Right To Live** exemplify the intensified social reference of cinema used in the service of the community. Grierson would have approved and mightily.

Avoiding ideology altogether, most of the films screened during the Seminar can be best described as portraits of contemporary society. Reportage is the basic method and the manner is reflective of British Free Cinema aesthetics in the 1950s. Unlike the traditional documentary in which the observer's position is external, these films move so close to the subject that detachment is all but abandoned. If this

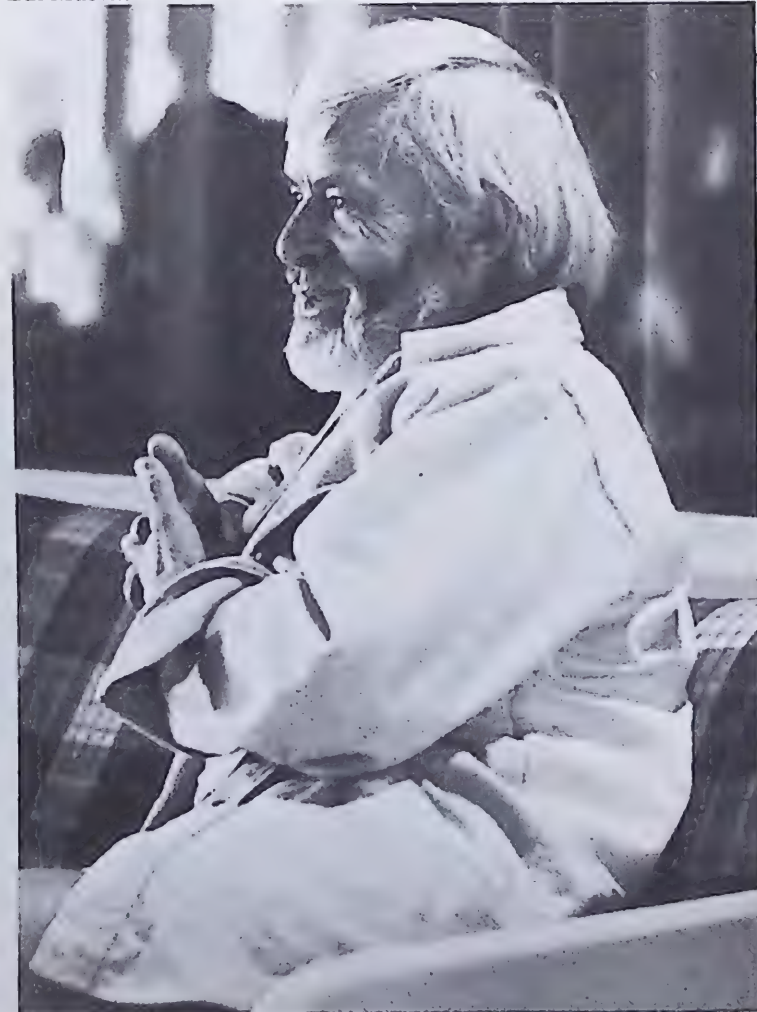


photo Chris Holland

Derek May from the NFB getting his point across.

Bill Mason.

photo Chris Holland



Grierson's interest was in creating a progressive civic will through public education in regard to the nature of social and political influences in a fast-changing world. He was convinced, in the early days of the 30's, that film was a singularly appropriate medium through which people could be made to understand modern organization and the vast corporate elements in society. So informed, the "people," collectively, might better affect a climate for change where change is needed. "We were reformers, open and avowed," said Grierson, but reformers minus partisan political stripe. Correct political change, he maintained to the very end of his life, will be that alignment of political principles and loyalties which, given the circumstances of the world today, will best serve the "people," everywhere.

Ingenuous? Whoever manages to speak of evil and decadent forces or even of healthy elements with so little attempt at definition (never mind the remedy) is guilty of the wildest naïvete, however well-intentioned his humanist concern. And so he did and so he was. But with this saving grace, Grierson enunciated the primary principles of the documentary idea for good and all when, late in life, he reaffirmed that with which he began: today, he said, the materials of citizenship are different and the perspectives wider and more dif-

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suggests a degree of recklessness (and, in fact, shaping frequently suffers, as a consequence) the result is often a film of intimacy and vividness quite beyond that of the traditional documentary.



Terry Burke

photo Chris Holland

The sensibility is that of a Lindsay Anderson and before him a Robert Flaherty: not the propagandist but the poet. It is here that we depart from Grierson. "Fantasy will not do", he said, "nor the dribblings of personal sentiment or personal story." But the tradition of human revelation, the personal documentary, is fellow-traveller to its more politically-conscious counterpart. It has been so since Flaherty produced *Nanook Of The North* and Grierson first coined the word "documentary" in a critical review of the film.

There is little remaining, in the contemporary documentary, of the Neo-Rousseauism of the early Flaherty. Universal values tend to give way to more immediate concerns, if one may judge on the strength of a majority of the films shown at the Seminar. Fast film, the quiet 16mm. Eclair, the radio mike and the hand-held camera allow an expressive, personal use of the medium. The focus, as Lewis Jacobs once described it, is not great issues, but human event on a human scale. Of the many filmmakers whose work was screened, most seem to have held hard and fast to this notion as if to God's truth.

The idiosyncracies of the celebrity-figure formed the nucleus of a group of Seminar film offerings: *Janis* by Budge Crawley, *Toller* by Pen Densham and edited by John Watson, *Flora* by the NFB's Peter Raymont, *Jill Johnston-Oct. '75* by Lydia Wazana and Kay Armatage, *His Worship, Mr. Montreal* by Donald Brittain and Marrin Cannell, and *Morgantaler* edited by Daniel Garson. It is impossible in the context of this article to offer a critical analysis of any of them. It is enough to say that the film treatment differs, one to the next, as widely as the choice of personality/subject suggests that it might.

A direct cinema approach which stresses empathy with the subject matter rather than observation of it is an ap-

proach familiar enough to us through the work of Allan King. The style was very much in evidence in a large proportion of the films shown at the conference. The considerable impact achieved by several depended greatly on the viewer's ability to respond emotionally to whatever issue the film served. Edging perilously close to voyeurism, the approach demands a great deal of conscience-examining on the part of the filmmaker. Human vulnerability is ever the focus here: individual capacity to cope with affliction is its constant ambience. Taste – for want of a better word, – is its most rigorous requirement and many filmmakers used this approach intelligently and with sensitivity. Among them: Ben Levin: *You See – I've Had A Life*, Mark Anderson: *Inside Story – Marek* (BBC), Leslie Harris: *Chabot Solo* (BBC), Martha Coolidge: *Not A Pretty Picture* (USA), Peter Byszewski and Maurice Borenstein: *Moments In Between*, Lorrie Graham: *50 Years At A Cow's Ass*, Richard Rowberry: *The Three Of Us*, Derek May: *Pictures Of The 1930s* (NFB), Alan Zweig: *The Boys*, Debbie Kirkland: *All In The Same Boat* (Film Australia).

These are the films of significance in terms of the needs of film libraries. Insofar as they mirror contemporary problems of living and do it well, it appears to matter, not at all, whether the films forego a broader Griersonian purpose. To be candid, the interchange between filmmaker and film librarian was what this conference was all about, John Grierson, notwithstanding. A buyer and a seller. A pragmatic, no-nonsense approach of "tell us what you need and we'll give it to you" gave purpose to their coming together. Marketability counts and if a film on rape like Martha Coolidge's *Not A Pretty Picture* fills a greater need than does Rex Tasker's *Moses Coady*, then...



Kay Armatage

photo Chris Holland

But what of the activist film? With two notable exceptions – *A Right To Live* and *Moses Coady* –, it was distinguished chiefly by its absence. A disappointment surely for pioneer filmmaker (and Grierson colleague) Basil Wright who, with Wayne Cunningham, chaired this year's session.

Its deficiencies aside, the Grierson Film Seminar provided an international forum, in which the presentation of a film was followed by a discussion of its ideas, its techniques – not only by its author, but by a jury of his peers; filmmaker and film user alike. Is this not the very essence of the democratic idea so favored by Grierson? □

OPINION

THE FIGHT TO PROTECT CANADIAN FILM

Feature film production must be viewed as a business; and in many ways current discussions that surround our budding Canadian film industry are a mirror image of a broader problem facing Canadian industry as a whole. A recent report by the Science Council of Canada indicates that, in addition to the current problems of labor costs, "Canada is being whip-sawed". Our industry must compete with "advanced high technology countries with a competitive edge in design and development." Further, "much of our industry is too small, unproductive and weak in new technology." This position is not dissimilar to the status of the Canadian feature film production industry.

As a result of our general industry problems, the Science Council of Canada has developed a policy framework. Much of this framework is applicable to the film production industry, i.e.:

1. to encourage specialization and identify appropriate areas of world market demand;
2. to build larger, Canadian-owned corporations that can more aggressively pursue production opportunities;
3. to rationalize the industry, not necessarily for economies of scale but to help us win world markets;
4. to develop clearly-understood and measurable policies, rather than piece-meal ones, that support the expansion of world markets for Canadian products.

One of the film industry's ongoing problems is the tremendous difference in perspective by the various sectors of the Canadian film community. In 1974, filmmakers in Winnipeg stated "unequivocally, film is an expression and affirmation of the cultural reality of this country first and a business second." In direct opposition to this approach, the majority of active film producers, distributors and exhibitors view film primarily as a vehicle of entertainment which should not be limited. Because the Secretary of State Department is trying to satisfy both points of view in arriving at a film policy, it faces a serious dilemma.

ACTRA'S policy of the '70's defines a Canadian film as "a film that is written, produced, directed, acted and made by Canadians. We do not suggest (and indeed we reject suggestions) that subject matter must be Canadian, which is, in our opinion, a self-defeating limitation." There is an underlying ACTRA philosophy behind this definition with which the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association takes issue. ACTRA believes that with a relatively modest annual expenditure of public funds, Canada can develop and sustain a feature film operation that would, assuming certain standards of quality and popular acceptance, quickly become one of the major production units in the world. The CMPDA agrees that the Canadian industry has great potential; but, we are convinced that bureaucratically-administered funds, even if generously provided, would

not lead to the development of a viable Canadian industry; and, further, that a "modest annual expenditure of public funds" would have no significant impact on the industry as a whole. Film production is an extremely expensive and risky business!

ACTRA has also indicated that Canada has everything needed for an industry: - writers, actors, directors and producers, as well as a proven pool of technical talent. We do have technical facilities, interesting locations and some reservoir of material; however, it is self-deceiving to believe that we have these resources in sufficient number to sustain an industry. We are shy, in practically every category, when it comes to internationally experienced individuals. Most importantly, we are particularly short of experienced producers, the people who can 'apply the glue' to film projects!

Although U.S. companies have achieved a level of success in filmmaking that far exceeds that in any other country, their track record is by no means reassuring. A success ratio of 1 in 8 is the norm in this very high-risk industry and that one success must compensate for losses or break-evens of 7 other projects. Canadian filmmakers hypothesize that, if the whole spectrum of American films were kept out of Canada, the Canadian public would ultimately condition itself to seeing Canadian pictures. The other possibility, more consistent with historical trends, is that the numbers of theatre goers would continue to decline, and, ultimately, become extinct.

There is, throughout current industry dialogue, an unfortunate stigma of anti-Americanism. In her recent publication *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture*, dealing with the Motion Picture Association of America, S.M. Crean writes "at the end of 1975, scripts were already being sent to London and New York for approval, the door was open again for U.S. majors to make money producing superficially Canadian films with CFDC backing." This is a distortion. In many cases, distribution agreements provided by the U.S. companies for Canadian projects have been the basis for attracting Canadian investors.

The financial performance of most Canadian pictures has been poor but this is typical of the industry worldwide. The current track record indicates a need for more "marketplace orientation" on the part of our filmmakers; and does not support the rationale for a punitive levy at the box office. A levy would be passed on to the consumer and would, no doubt, further reduce the available audience for all motion pictures, both Canadian and foreign. In any event, availability of funds is not the problem. An attractive 100% Capital Cost Allowance is making large amounts of money available to Canadian film producers. Unfortunately, many filmmakers are still understandably hesitant to garner their resources and take advantage of this situation. Many

OPINION

continue to devote their time and energy to lobbying for levies, legislated take-overs, border restrictions, additional withholding taxes, etc. — all the known restrictive measures that really have nothing to do with the quality or the international competitiveness of a film.

At present, a small handful of our filmmakers are addressing themselves to the question of how they might participate in the total world market. If a film is a major box office success in Canada, it might achieve a 0.5% market share of the box office and will gross approximately \$1 million. On the other hand, this same market share world-wide would approximate \$20 million. This situation is a totally different equation — a more exciting opportunity — that would assure greater revenues and, at the same time, support the playing of Canadian features in Canadian theatres on the basis of demand rather than on the basis of an artificially-conceived protective measure.

Current statistics indicate that film distributors average approximately 1/3 of the box office; thus a film that grosses \$1 million in Canada realizes film rentals of approximately \$330,000. After deducting an estimated distribution fee of \$100,000, the producer would be left with \$230,000. Given a reasonable production cost of \$1 million to achieve the above box office, the film is a very long way from realizing a profit for investors from Canadian exhibition alone.

Taking into account the underlying need to penetrate the international marketplace, the tremendously high risk factors involved, both in terms of absolute dollars and the ability to achieve some predictable success pattern, and the competitive factors from other forms of leisure-time activities, there would seem to be little doubt that, unless filmmaking is viewed as a business first, it will never realize its potential as a vehicle of Canadian culture at home and abroad.

The premise that placed film production within the framework of the Secretary of State's Department must, at this juncture, be seriously questioned. The Canadian motion picture industry is just that — an industry. The Secretary of State's personnel are few in number and, although intensely desirous of achieving their objectives, they do not have the time, the budget, nor the necessary orientation to do the job that is required. If it is logical for the feature film industry to be situated within the bureaucratic system, then it must be with the Federal Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and its Provincial counterparts. The Secretary of State and the Provincial Departments of Culture should provide input on overall policies; but implementation and priorities, measurement of success, evaluation of export potential, and establishment of incentives must fall within the business-oriented branches of Government.

Millard S. Roth

Executive Director

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ORGANIZATIONS

ACTRA

**Association of Canadian
Television and Radio Artists**

105 Carlton Street, Toronto,
Ontario M5B 1M2 Tel.: 363-6335

ACTRA's recent refusal to issue work permits to Brian Bedford, Maggie Smith and Margaret Tyzak for a CBC-FM broadcast of Stratford's *Richard III* was another chapter in a continuing dispute. The corporation has intransigently insisted on its right to cast foreign performers as it sees fit. ACTRA claims its right to decide who its members will work with and wants an effective voice in decisions on the use of foreign talent.

Much of the media response to the *Richard III* decision was negative. The union was charged with "chauvinism" and with a desire to exclude foreign performers from Canada.

Such charges distort ACTRA's stand. The union has always favored unhindered movement by performing artists across national borders. But at present Canadians find it almost impossible to get work in radio, film or television in the United Kingdom or United States. The laws of those countries force alien performers to seek work permits which authorities issue only after consulting with the unions on the availability of local talent. It is only just that performers wishing to appear in Canada submit to the same sort of regulation here.

While the foreign talent question is a broad issue for the union, it expresses itself most sharply in relations with the CBC, since the CBC is not just another broadcasting entity, but a public system with a public mandate which involves the presentation of Canada to Canadians by Canadians.

ACTRA does not say that this mandate should stop Canadians from seeing international stars. Besides, the cable systems carry huge doses of American broadcasting and the Canadian networks, including CBC, carry many American and British programs. Some of the current British offerings on CBC radio include *Vivat Rex*, the *Goon Show*, and *My Word*. These involve the best of British performing talent in drama and light entertainment.

It is within this context that ACTRA demands that the CBC give Canadians priority in casting and employ foreign talent in Canadian productions only in exceptional cases. And the union wants a strong voice in the decision made in any case at issue.

The union's national executive is aware of opposition not only from the daily papers but from some union members. The executive is not averse to a continuing debate on policy, even though the members have already expressed themselves clearly — for example, in two votes rejecting a CBC agreement on this issue.

The executive believes that, whatever the differences on a particular action, its stand on the whole has been principled, correct, and in line with the expressed desires of the union's members.

Stan Linkovich

CFTA

**Canadian Film
and Television Association**

55 York St., suite 512
Toronto, Ont. M5J 1S2
(416) 363-8374

We're proud! The CFTA Film Awards for 1977 will be announced at an Awards luncheon at noon on Friday, October 28, 1977 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Toronto. In judging, there are seven categories of films and videotapes in the competition: public relations, sales promotion, travel and recreation, nature and wildlife, sports, educational and instructional, and TV information and public affairs. There will be a special award to the production judged best overall. In addition, there are six categories of craft awards: direction, cinematography, script, editing, sound and music score.

Harry J. Boyle, Chairman of the CRTC, will participate in the awards presentations and be guest speaker at the luncheon.

We're impatient! In spite of several contacts and meetings with Secretary of State John Roberts and a much more open dialogue with André Lamy of the NFB, we're still waiting for the long-promised policy statement from the government on its support for the film industry. What we have asked is that private sector producers have greater access to the sponsored film requirements of government which, up to now, have largely been supplied by the NFB, and second, that we take an active role in assisting the government to design a more efficient tendering system.

These are logical demands and we continue to press our case.

We're hopeful! We recently made a submission to the Ministry of Industry and Tourism of the Ontario Government making the case for larger annual budgets to support the private film industry. Among the recommendations:

(1) make available loan funds on a matching basis for investing in production of TV and educational films by distributors to assist distributors in promoting foreign sales of such films.

(2) make the film industry an eligible industry to receive financial assistance from the Ontario Development Corporation.

(3) make greater use of the film medium to achieve the program goals of government; specifically, for example, to use film and videotape more extensively in the province's export promotion program particularly for the products of smaller companies.

We expect to initiate similar approaches to other provincial governments over the next few months.

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SPECIAL EVENTS

14TH YORKTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Tradition has a way of bearing down and drowning organizations in the swilling swirl of their own make-believe world. Progress is choked to death by irrelevant rules of procedure and an organization's usefulness ceases. The pains of the final fading are usually marked by a sixty second CBC radio eulogy that nets a hungry free-lancer fifty bucks but little insight behind the passing.

Yorkton has held an international film festival for 27 years; "Once every two years is enough, thank you", said the original volunteer committee. Although 27 years does leave a considerable amount of tradition, it is usefulness that has kept the Festival alive.

It would be nice to say small town Western Canadian help-your-neighbor pioneer philosophy made it all possible. That's a large part of *how* Yorkton has survived, but *why* it survived is the type of film community it served and continues to serve.

Short films don't get headlines and tons of critical acclaim. They have a hard time fitting into North American commercial concepts of what is shown in a movie house. So they mostly aren't shown. Nevertheless, filmmakers stay alive by making short films to meet whatever demand or money that can be beaten out of the boards — be it school or corporate. They fulfill a particular useful purpose that goes back a long way.

The fledgling National Film Board, guided by John Grierson, had set up a network of film councils across Canada to show NFB documentaries in the days when a film projector still held semi-mystical qualities. The Yorkton Film Council was soon thinking beyond church basement film showings. Someone got the bright idea to hold an international documentary film festival, and so they did in the fall of 1950.



The audience selected the winner that year and for the next two Festivals. A panel of adjudicators took over the job in 1956 and has done it ever since.

Frank Moriss, who was on the '56 panel, felt Yorkton should get itself a grand prize to symbolize the Festival. The long-time Winnipeg newspaper film critic felt a "Golden Sheaf" would be appropriate as Yorkton was surrounded by rich rolling farm land.

The original Golden Sheaf was cast by Winnipeg Brass and presented to a Czechoslovakian film in 1958. Copies of the original design ran out in the mid-sixties. But thanks to the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Organization (SGIO) a new Golden Sheaf will be designed by Saskatchewan artists and cast in Saskatchewan for presentation this year.

Cold war comedy found its way to Yorkton in 1956 when a two man Soviet delegation flew in to Yorkton's sometime open airport. The RCMP followed the Russians constantly and were probably scribbling copious lists of everyone Russians looked at in the hotel lobby; the crafty commies went down the back stairs and out for an unhindered tour about town.

Besides diplomatic delegations, Yorkton attracted films from literally every continent. The People's Republic of China started entering in 1958, setting a precedent the Canadian government picked up on over a decade later.

The nature of the Festival started to change in the sixties. Television was making a marked impact on people's viewing habits. The Festival format starting changing to include more than just documentary films. The award categories have continued to change from Festival to Festival in an attempt to match the short film industry's progress.

Financing used to be accomplished through silver collections and program sales. As the public demanded more, and costs escalated, government grants started to meet financing needs. The film screenings have always been free at Yorkton which is perhaps the reason Saskatchewan's government came through with large monetary and material support for this Festival.

The 14th Yorkton International Film Festival promises to fill in gaps that other Canadian film festivals leave. Besides the open awards competition, two very exciting workshops, and a trade day involving filmmakers and writers will mean a film immersion *extraordinaire* will occur from October 11 to 15. And it's all being done by building on the tradition to enhance the usefulness.

Don Humphries

FILM REVIEWS

Silvio Narizzano's

Why Shoot the Teacher

d: Silvio Narizzano, **sc:** James DeFelice, **ph:** Marc Champion, **ed:** Max Benedict, Stan Cole, **sd:** Richard Lightstone, **m:** Ricky Hy-slop, **i.p.:** Bud Cort, Samantha Eggar, Chris Wiggins, Gary Reineke, John Friesen, Michael J. Reynolds **exec. p.:** Fil Fraser, **p:** Lawrence Hertzog, **p.c.:** W.S.T.T. Productions Limited (1976), **col:** 35mm, **dist:** Ambassador. **Running time:** 100 minutes

True to the best tradition of prairie art it is the prairie itself that emerges as the dominant personality in this promising first feature produced by CTV producer Larry Hertzog and Edmonton independent Fil Fraser. **Why Shoot the Teacher** is based on humorist Max Braithwaite's reminiscences about a year he spent during the Depression as a young school-teacher in an isolated prairie community. Within the context of the book's first-person narrative the prairie functions largely as a grim backdrop to the young man's serio-comic confrontation with the alien human realities of grassroots existence. But in adapting the story to the screen the makers of the film have seized the opportunities inherent in the transfer and objectified the setting as an overwhelming presence in its own right.

What stays with you after you've left the theatre are less the details of the human interactions than images of the human figure in interaction with the landscape. Marc Champion's photography displays an acute sensitivity to the dynamics of this peculiar interrelationship — for example, to the paradoxical effect the flat immensity of the prairies achieves in both dwarfing and at the same time magnifying the human figure that



Samantha Eggar and Bud Cort find consolation on the Canadian prairie

strides its surface. Or to the curious resemblance this most arid of landscapes bears in winter to the sea, and the horse-drawn sleighs of the farmers to boats as they rock and toss their way across its rolling cover of drifts. The young teacher is forever being framed within a vista of unrelenting horizontals, sky and land, with himself or perhaps the schoolhouse far back in the distance the only upright elements in that whole stretched-out world. There is one scene in which the local farming families are shown arriving for a dance at the schoolhouse in a prairie darkness relieved only by the glimmer of a few oil-lamps that carries a hushed beauty almost archetypal in its poignancy.

Not that the film is another **Slipstream**. It does work at other levels than the purely visual. For one thing, it is often deliciously funny. Max wakes up in the cramped house of the McDougalls after his first night in Willowgreen with an urgent need for the toilet facilities. After finding the seat of the outdoor privy piled high with snow he is just crouching down to business in hasty desperation in the barn when the bell-clear voice of a young child asks him whether he has seen their cow yet. In another scene, Max, beleaguered by the demands of so many age levels together in one classroom instructs an older girl to read to the youngest

children from one of the books on the shelf; and only later discovers that the rapt little group is taking in every sordid detail of *White Slavery-The Horrible Traffic in Young Women*.

For the most part, the humor of the film emerges directly from the humanity of situation and character, rather than being purchased at its cost. Nowhere is this more true than in the classroom sequences with their ongoing collisions between the teacher's expectations and the children's rugged priorities. When the students are asked what the capital of Canada is and a boy answers "C", when they are called upon to define a "beach" and a girl responds "a female dog" — we laugh at their responses, but with the knowledge that their responses illustrate the gaping distance between the rarefied world of the text-books and the narrow strenuous world they inhabit.

The children themselves are one of the best things in the film. Drawn largely, I believe, from the local population in Hanna, Alberta, where the film was shot, they are entirely and touchingly believable as the tough-innocent progeny of the Depression-ridden farmers and their worn-out women. Dale McGowan is especially fine as the class bully, Jake, with whom Max has his central conflict.

There is, in fact, a wonderful grittiness of texture to the film's depic-

Film Credit Abbreviations: d.: Director, asst. d.: Assistant Director, sc.: Script, adapt.: Adaptation, dial.: Dialogue, ph.: Photography, sp. ph. eff.: Special Photographic Effects, ed.: Editor, sup. ed.: Supervising Editor, sd.: Sound, sd. ed.: Sound Editor, sd. rec.: Sound Recording, p. des.: Production Designer, a.d.: Art Director, set dec.: Set Decorator, m.: Music, m.d.: Music Director, cost.: Costumes, choreo.: Choreography, i.p.: Leading Players, exec. p.: Executive Producer, p.: Producer, assoc. p.: Associate Producer, p. sup.: Production Supervisor, p. man.: Production Manager, p.c.: Production Company, col.: Colour Process, dist.: Distributors, narr.: Narration.

tion of the community as a whole, a powerful quality essentially documentary in feeling that reaches its climax in the raw vitality of the dance scene. I see this documentary quality working with the film's other major strength, the sense of the landscape to preserve the resolute unsentimentality of Braithwaite's voice in the book. The young teacher can alter nothing to the shape of his desires. He is confronted with a reality in the people as obdurate and uncompromising as a force of nature. His education lies in the process of his acceptance of the place with all its givens, both human and nonhuman, intact. When Alice Field, the British war-bride of long ago runs away from her home during a ferocious blizzard and ends up spending the night at the schoolhouse with Max, no neat romantic resolution of her dilemma is proffered. Her husband, a man as hard as the land he battles, played with great authority by Michael J. Reynolds, comes to collect her the next morning; and his answer to the young teacher's attempts to tell him that he must do more for his wife is brutally conclusive – "You take care of the kids, teacher. I'll take care of the woman. And if you mention to anybody she was here, I'll break your back".

The major weakness of *Why Shoot the Teacher* lies in its structure. The makers of the film seem to have had some difficulty in translating Max's development, the process of his growing realizations as they appear in the narrator's leisurely ruminations on the page, into cinematic terms. In the book, for example, Max writes home asking for money to get back, but moves further and further away from sending the letter as he gradually yields to the logic or illogic of his situation. There is some business with a letter in the film but what it says is never really explained and its significance as a structural device is completely unrealized. Also, the book can begin with Max arriving at Willow-green because the author is at liberty to go back and fill in something of his background anytime he feels like it. The creators of the film, however, are pretty well stuck with establishing Max's context in dramatic terms from the beginning, in order to make the contrast between what he's used to and what he finds in the prairie schoolhouse meaningful. They try to do this in a very rapid scene at the train station as Max is being seen off by

his family but it doesn't work. So much is going on in this initial scene – it's the Depression era and people are out of work, Max has never been away from home before and his family spoils him, the train station is in the big city and it is very rushed and noisy – that the opening turns out one big overdrawn confusion. There is even a tentative stab at voice-over narration from Max which basically gets drowned-out by the main sound-effects.

Elsewhere, too, caricature ends up obscuring a scene's meaning. The local women who come in to clean up the schoolhouse and provide Max with food are so strident and fractious that we miss the point of their mingled toughness and kindness. In the crucial scene with the school inspector, Max must articulate his changed awareness of the local reality through a rousing defence of the students' rural experience. But the significance of his encounter with this type of the Canadian colonial mentality is deflected by the slapstick choreography of their interaction and the histrionic performance of Kenneth Griffith as the inspector – speaking an outlandish, hopelessly unidentifiable version of the mother-tongue.

This partial failure to make more of Max's adventures than self-enclosed comic episodes and to objectify his gradual development is attributable to weaknesses in both script and direction. When the Chairman of the School Board, genially played by Chris Wiggins, points out to Max that the small salary he will end up making is more than many farmers with thirty years' experience are living on, the teacher refuses dinner and rushes out the door with an abruptness that suggests a sudden attack of dysentery. It's not a particularly good way to show us that he been deeply affected by this revelation of prairie poverty.

The film's biggest problem, though, as far as I am concerned, is Bud Cort. Max is supposed to be the most ordinary of Canadian young men, not especially intelligent or courageous or idealistic or unusual in any way. It's a perfect ingenu role, with perhaps a dash of half-awakened sexuality thrown in to make him halfway interesting. Any number of Canadian actors could have played this role. Bud Cort is not, by a long stretch, your ordinary young man; and cutting his hair and dressing him in thirties style only emphasizes his enormous individual oddity. The very elements that

made him so right as the fantastical Brewster McCloud – the peculiar mixture of innocent babyishness and slightly sinister puckishness in his face, the virtually asexual angularity of his body – work against him in this film and provide an unsettling, extraneous dimension to his struggle for acceptance in the prairie community. He looks like a cartoon character to begin with, partially because of the slap-stick quality of the opening sequence. And although our identification with him deepens eventually, through the varied experiences we see him undergoing, this is less a tribute to his acting than to the richly-textured depiction of prairie life.

Cort simply doesn't convey any of the young man's easygoing charm that comes through in Braithwaite's book and would make the students' capitulation to Max (or his to them, for that matter) understandable. We get little sense that the character has grown on the inside because Cort just tends to alternate between a very tight-assed well-intentionedness and desperate comic hysteria. Even at his most emotionally earnest, a quality of self-righteous priggishness seems to attach itself to his manner – a function, I think, of Cort's attempt to clamp down on a screen presence whose essential strength is its quirky feyness. Where he really comes into his own is, appropriately enough in the scene where he does a reading with Alice Field from Noel Coward's *Private Lives*.

Samantha Eggar, on the other hand, is a delight as Alice Field and justifies every second of screen time she is given. It is a rich, multifaceted performance with fresh surprises about the character coming at you at every turn. The long sequence in the schoolhouse with Max that follows her desperate flight from her husband and children is the emotional centre of the film. We watch her move among the most amazing variety of metamorphoses – half-crazed drudge, dreamy-eyed young girl, terrified child, glowing, self-assured woman – and even after she has left the screen we feel that the character's complexity has been nowhere near exhausted. Alice Field is finally defeated by the prairie once again. But in the depth and emotional authenticity of her performance, Samantha Eggar is the one human element in the film that comes close to challenging the dominance of the prairie's grim imperatives.

Katherine Gilday

FILM REVIEWS

REVIEWS OF SHORT FILMS

Jill Johnston, October '75

d: Lydia Wazana, Kay Armatage, asst. d: Michele Moses, ph: Joan Churchill, Carol Betts, asst. ph: Ruth Hope, Lights: Barbara Mathiesen, ed: Helen Prince Buchsbaum, Allan Collins, Ruth Hope, sd: Susanne Depoe, m: Rough Trade, Cindy Moseley, p: Kay Armatage, Lydia Wazana, p.c.: K & L and Premier Operating Production (1975), col: 16mm., 35 minutes.



Jill Johnston, as she was, in 1975.

Jill Johnston flew up from the States to attend the premiere showing of *Jill Johnston, October '75*. In one sense, she lobbed a bombshell into the proceedings and ended up pretty well upstaging the film. In another sense, though, the film about Jill Johnston and Jill Johnston in person combined to form a totality – an Event, in fact, of such startling inner coherence that it deserves to stand as a cultural artifact in its own right.

The Innis College "Town Hall" was packed. Women from all the various allegiances and cross-allegiances of Toronto's women's movement had turned out in force. After the applause for the film had died down, the guest of honor came down to the front of the hall to speak. There was a conflict of interests between herself and the filmmakers, she announced. She couldn't relate to the film, thought that the image it created would harm her aspirations as a serious writer, and wouldn't sign a release for its sale or showing outside Canada.

The dialogue that followed between Johnston and the audience as some of its members urged the film's release while others spoke up in her defence was fast, funny and very revealing. It took on, at times, the sense of some monster therapy session. What did she object to in the film, people wanted to know. "I feel it's like someone not taking herself se-

riously", she said. It laid undue stress on the flipped-out lesbian, the performing-seal commando when this was the very skin she had almost completed the arduous process of shedding at the time the film was made. Now, she was no longer angry, no longer interested in the political side of the women's movement, period. Her primary concern was with her credibility as a writer and thinker, and the serious critical examination of her work it had been lacking for twenty years. The "media junkie" had finally dried-out.

Maybe. Or maybe "Once a junkie, always a junkie". Because what kept coming through loud and clear was that she didn't object to the film so much because it misrepresented her, but because it didn't portray her as she *wanted* to be seen. One of the scenes she thought should have been cut, for instance, because she didn't "feel that way anymore", showed her exploding in rage at a man in a public meeting, and threatening to kick him "in the balls" if he didn't leave immediately. She approved, on the other hand, of an interview sequence with Reiner Schwartz because she liked the "laid-back" self that came across, the "cool, low-key" manner in which she deflected his attempts to label her. Her notorious public stunts and previous film appearances – in 3 of Warhol's "home movies" – had been,

she explained, essentially modes of camouflage. The thing that had troubled her from the start about the Toronto filming was the lack of a "director or conversational foil", a script or any clear-cut direction. The reason for her discomfort on this score was implicit in everything she said: the straight-out documentary style in which the film was conceived left her little room for hiding-out or masquerade, little leverage for shaping a Jill Johnston *persona*. It all came down to a question of "control" – control of her life, control of her media image.

Only it was difficult to see how the film *could* harm her interests as a "serious" writer. For those of us who had come to the screening with only the vaguest notion of Jill Johnston as the *Village Voice* – lesbian-feminist-columnist, the lady we saw in the film was a revelation. Though the context of the filming was a fleeting visit she paid to Toronto, her commitment to her writing emerged inescapably as the central fact on her existence. Again and again, through her own voice-over reflections, through scenes of a public reading she gave from unpublished works, through the words of the woman she shared her life with, it was Jill Johnston as writer and thinker that was stressed.

Tantalizing fragments of her mythology of female individuation are provided; and the personal psychological dynamic from which it springs – Johnston's quest for the missing father-principle in her own life – is, with some intelligence, reflected in the film's structure. We move from the metaphorical search contained in her writings to the realization that she has come to Toronto to visit her real father, the carillonneur at Hart House. The actual encounter between father and daughter never pans out in the film, perhaps because its drama exists only in the symbolic world of Johnston's imagination. The filmmakers manage to cover their tracks quite well, through a montage of Johnston and her lover in the bell-tower that merges literal and symbolic aspects of her quest. No amount of skilful editing, however, can disguise the thinness of what actually happened up there – better to have abandoned documentary altogether at this point for outright symbolic reconstruction and left the father missing.

Overall, though, I liked the film. I liked the modesty of its ambitions. In an interview toward the end, Johnston states that once she was gripped by politics but that now she is gripped by something else. "I guess I'll just go from grip to grip," she comments. Everything in the film, from the title to the rapidity of its pace to the closing scene of Johnston quipping with her interviewer proclaims its subject to be the Jill Johnston of one brief and somewhat artificial situation, a Jill Johnston caught in motion and in transition. I liked the refusal of the film's makers, in what must have been truly a high-pressure situation, to impose any more of a pattern on their material than was compatible with its somewhat ragged, open-ended nature. I liked the film's honesty. Even the "sensational" bits Johnston disliked so much, like the scene that had her partying with some local women to the raunchy sounds of Carol Pope, came through in their mixture of defiant theatricality and the awkwardness of instant feminist intimacy. Deadly accurate.

Accurate. Despite all the changes she had been through since the film was made, despite the wholesale cleaning-up-of-her-act she had conducted in her life and in her work, the woman who addressed us from the front of the auditorium was recognizably continuous with the one in the

film. That's what freaked Jill Johnston out. "Watching my own self-consciousness", she admitted, "was awful." The documentary footage was too painful and incontrovertible a reminder of what she had been, and what, to some extent, she unavoidably still was – without the redeeming clasp of a controlling structure. And this had to be the largest irony of the whole Event; that it was the film that supplied the very terms to make Johnston's rejection of it comprehensible: her hunger for the validation provided by "masculine" values – seriousness, control, limits. Too bad the makers of the film had to tangle with a veteran feminist motivated by such radical mistrust of her own "outrageous" femaleness. Too bad Jill Johnston doesn't realize how impressive she was, in all the rawness of her self-consciousness, to the rest of us.

Katherine Gilday

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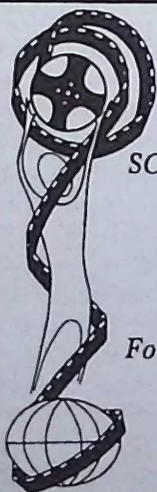
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